THE

Mystery of Faith

Opened up:

Or some Sermons

concerning Faith (two whereof were not formerly Printed)

Wherein the Nature, Excellency, and Usefulnesse of that noble Grace is much cleared, and the practice thereof most powerfully pressed.

Whereunto are added other three Sermons, two concerning the *Great Salvation*, (one of these not formerly Printed.) and a third concerning *Death*.

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Minister of the Gospel in *Glasgow*.

All these Sermons being now carefully Revised, and much Corrected.

Joh. 3. 18. *He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

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Mr. GRAY'S Myſtery of Faith.

Mystery of Iniquity
Opened up:
Or, Some Sermons
(Lately Preached)
Wherein the Nature, Rise, Progress, and Odiousness of that
Great Mystery, (one of whose
Horns formerly Pushed) and a

Christian Reader.

How many weighty and soul piercing Sentences that you will find in these following Sermons, this is one; That the Professors of this age, whether they goe to heaven or hell, they will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place: the one to the free grace of God, and the other to his Justice: *And certainly, if we speak of those in this time, whose lot it shall be to inherit the Kingdom, they cannot but acknowledge themselves indebted to his love, above all that have gone before them; for washing them from such ugly pollutions, as this generation hath been defiled with; for bringing them through so great tribulations, preserving them in the midst of so great temptations, and dangerous snares to have compassed them; yea, and still keeping in the light before them, notwithstanding of so many blasts, (if we may so speak) from all the four winds of hell to blow them out. And on the other hand, if we speak of those who in this generation shall perish, assuredly their debt unto divine Justice must be exceeding great, above all who are gone down to the pit before them; because the Roll of their mercies will be found to have been many cubits longer, and many cubits broader, than theirs who lived in the preceding ages; and the great things that the Lord hath wrought in our dayes, have born a*

greater testimony against the wickednesse, hardnesse and atheism of this time, then of many former. But above all, the great measure of Gospel-light that he hath no lesse plentifully offered, then wonderfully preserved to this generation, beyond all our Ancestors; hath undoubtedly made the sin of these who shall utterly reject their own mercy, so out of measure sinfull, and their unbelief so exceedingly inexcusable, that their guilt must needs justifie Corazin and Bethsaida, or Sodom and Gommorrah in that day when every man shall give account of himself to God. And amongst the many preaching witnesses that (alas we are afraid) shall compear in that day against many yet living in their pleasures, and dead while they live: This now glorified Author cannot but be one, whose testimony must be very condemning, especially to the vain, loose, negligent and time-wasting youth in this age. For when he was first drawn to the Ministry, he was but a youth indeed, scarce twenty years compleat; for within that age, that by the constitutions of this Church (except in case of more then common abilities which indeed he had) is required for entring to that great and holy Calling. And for the space of two years after (which was all the time that the Church enjoyed his Labour, he was helped to presse the Truths and Threatnings of God so home upon the Consciences of his hearers, that as it was observed of him, by one of his most Learned and pious Colleagues Master Durham, who is now in glory with him, he did many times cause the hair of their head

ſtand up: The Lord not only hereby verifying his Word, that he can take the weak things of the world to confound the ſtrong, and out of the mouth of Babes can perfect his own praiſe, but deſigning alſo (as would ſeem of purpoſe) to ſend a Boy out of the School for a reprover of the ſluggiſhneſſe of his People, that thereby the aged might be the more aſhamed, and the younger more afraid: Neither do wee think that this was all, but truely when we conſider what meaſure of Graces, Gifts and Experiences the Lord did beſtow upon ſo young a perſon, and then with what humility, ſelf-denial, gravity, prudence, diligence, authority and moderation he was helped to manage theſe Talents during that ſhort time of his Miniſtry; It may be juſtly conceived that the Lord brought him forth to be a great conviction even to many of us in the Miniſtery who came into our Maſters vineyard long before him, and will go out behind him: And indeed to us it looketh ſomewhat like the Lords taking up of the little Childe and ſetting him amongſt the midſt of his contending Diſciples in theſe times, that even they who would be greateſt amongſt us, might be leaſt, and ſee ſomewhat of their own weakneſſe.

As to this little Peece, whatever yee ſhall finde in it: It hath this to ſay for its ſelf, that whereas many Writings in the world, do intrude themſelves upon the Preſſe, yet this the Preſſe hath violently thruſt into the world: For ſome young Student, from his good affection to the edification of the Lords People, and (no doubt) from his high eſteem of the precious Author his

memory, having given in to the Presse a Copie of some of these Sermons, being only Notes taken from his mouth when he preached them, no sooner were they seen abroad, but all the Presses in the Nation fell a labouring about them, so that (if we mistake not) in lesse nor two or three Moneths time, three or four Impressions were cast off, yet all of them so imperfect and maimed, that howbeit the excellency of the matter, and the fresh remembrance of the worthy Author his name, made them very sweet to many (especially those who had heard him Preach) yet the unsuitable dresse wherein they appeared, and their mistakes of the first Writers (they being hardly able to take up every thing as it was spoken) occasioning diverse material failings in the sense, besides lesser faults, could not but be a trouble to those who were acquainted not only with the singular graces, but parts also of that eminent Youth. This gave occasion to some friends, to speak a little what way these prejudices which both the Truth and the Authors name might lye under, by these uncorrect Impressions might be taken off. And finding that the Copie, which by providence the worthy young Gentlewoman who was his wife, had lying by her, though it was but Notes taken from his mouth, yet was the most correct that could be found: And that it also did contain the whole purposes that he had preached upon these Texts; yea, the whole purposes concerning Faith, that he had preached according to that method, proposed in the first of the Sermons formerly published. This was undertaken to be revised by some, who albeit none

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of the fittest for these imployments, yet rather or nothing should be done in the businesse, were content to bestow some hours upon it, according as other necessary imployments would permit. And now having sought out all the Notes of these Sermons which we could finde from other hands, and compared them with the Copie abovementioned, wee do again present them unto the Lords People, not with any confidence that our pains hath put any new lustre upon them; only wee have some hopes that the whole subject being now before them, and these things in the way of expression helped, which either might seem to be somewhat unpleasant, or liable to mistakes, they shall not now be lesse edifying, nor lesse acceptable then formerly they were. We did not think fit to make any considerable alterations as to the method, or other things of that kind, lest haply by straining his excellent purposes too much, to shape them to the ordinary Rules, or to reduce them to that order which might best have pleased our selves, we should have wronged the matter it self, at least, have put these to a losse who did hear him Preach, and it may be now upon their reading things in that same order as they heard them, will be the more readily brought under the impressions of that livelinesse, power and weight which (it may be) formerly they felt upon their hearts when he was speaking.

If the method do not altogether satisfie some spirits, or the explication seem not so full, or if they finde some introductions which possibly lead not in so close, or seem not so fit to the subject

ject of the Sermon, or happly now and then there bee some little digressions from the main purpose, wee shall desire that this may not at all bee constructed to bee the Authors ignorance of Rules and Method, or his want of abilities in humane Learning: it being known to those who were best acquaint with him, that hee had indeed a Scholastick Spirit, and was in reading far beyond his age and opportunities for Studying. But as to all these, wee shall intreat you rather to consider, 1. His age, and that his gift was but in the very moulding and breaking (as wee speak) in the point of order and method, when the Lord was pleased to call him home from his work. 2. That every man hath his proper gift of God, who in his great wisdom (and certainly for the good of His Church) doth so order, that there is somewhat singular and peculiar almost in every mans way, as to these things. 3. For any thing we know, hee had never that high esteem of this or any other of his labours, as to design any of them for publick view: and these are but Notes taken from his mouth. 4. We are perswaded hee studied more his hearers than himself. Ye will easily perceive, when ye have but read a little, that hee hath been a man of a very zealous temper; that the great bensil of his Spirit, and that which hee did wholly spend himself about, was to make people know their dangerous condition by nature, and by all means to perswade them to believe, and lay hold upon the Great salvation: And truely that a man in such a frame should lesse attend to these lesse

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things is not to be wondered at. And indeed, though these things be good in themselves, and worthy to be looked to in their own place, yet for a Minister of the Gospel, in all Auditories, and upon all occasions, to pin up every purpose to such a method, and insist into such a measure of Explications and Criticismes upon words, it is but to fetter himself, and to starve his people. 5. Consider the dulnesse of the most part of hearers in this age, and how hard a thing it is to awake a sleeping world, and to get them but to think that it doth concern them to hear in earnest; And possibly it was not a small piece of spiritual wisedome in him, (and it may be not unfit to be imitated by others) to begin or end all his Sermons with an awakening word concerning Heaven, or Hell, or Judgement, and the danger of choising the evil, and refusing the good. 6. For digressions, the truth is, that his soul was so filled with such longings after Heaven, and Glory, and so inflamed with the love of Christ, (especially towards the latter end of his race) that when he fell upon these subjects, upon which (ye will see) most of these digressions are, he could not well contain himself, nor easily bring off his own Spirit! A thing not unusual to the Saints in Scripture. And howbeit such things might seem somewhat singular (in the time) and not so coherent; yet now we have grounds to apprehend that they were often strong influences of the Lords Spirit, stirring up a lamp (as it were) into a sudden blaze, that was not to burn long in his Church.

But now we shall detain you no longer; only this we may assure you of, That although these Sermons are neither so exact, nor so full as doubtlesse they would have been, if they had come from the Authors own pen, yet as we dare say, they were studied with Prayer, Preached with Power, and backed with Successe; so also, if ye shall read them with consideration, meditate with Prayer, and Practise with diligence, ye shall neither find your time nor pains ill bestowed, but shall have cause to blesse the Lord for this amongst other helps that he hath given, for making you meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light. That it may be blest to this end, is the earnest desire and prayer of your servants in the work of the Lord,

Ro. Trail.

28 OC 62 Jo. Stirling.

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The Mystery of Faith Opened up.

SERMON I.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

THis everlasting Gospel (in which there are drawn so many precious draughts and divine lineaments of the transcendent beauty of a crucified Saviour, and of the riches of his unsearchable grace) is a most precious and excellent thing, not onely because it doth contain most absolute and sublime precepts and commands, in the exercise and obedience of which, we do not only attain unto the highest pitch in holinesse, but likewise, because it containeth most rich and precious promises, in the possession and fruition of which wee are advanced to the highest pinacle of eternal blessednes; this is clear in the grace of Faith; for what doth more purifie the heart, and stamp it with the Image of the invisible God then this grace of Faith? And what richer

richer promises are annexed to any duty, then to this duty of believing, to wit, ever lasting life, and fruition of God. So that if we have dwelt fourty dayes at the foot of Mount *Sinai*, and had been under the greatest discovering and condemning power of the Law, we may yet come with boldnesse to mount Sion, and there imbrace Jesus Christ, who is *the end of the Law for righteousnesse to such as believe*; Upon which Mount hee standeth holding forth the golden Scepter of his peace, desiring us to imbrace him, and is crying out that word in *Isa.* 65. 1, *Behold me, behold me.* O may wee not summond Angels, and these twenty four Elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder, that ever such a command as this came forth, that wee should believe on the Name of the Son of God, after that wee had broken that first and primitive command, *That we should not eat of the forbidden tree*: Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoyce over judgement? And O may wee not wonder at the precious oath of the everlasting Covenant, whereby he hath sworn, *That hee delighteth not in the death of sinners?* What (suppose yee) were poor *Adams* thoughts when at first the Doctrine of Free-grace, and of a crucified Christ Jesus a Saviour, was preached unto him in Paradise? What a divine surprisal was this, that heaven should have preached peace to earth, after that earth had proclaimed war against heaven? Was not this a low step of condescendency? to behold an offended God preaching peace and good will

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to a guilty ſinner; What could ſelf-deſtroying *Adam* think of theſe morning and firſt diſcoveries of this everlaſting Covenant? Chriſt, as it were, in the morning of time giving vent to that infinite love, which was reſting in his boſome and precious heart, before the foundation of the world was laid. Wee know not whether the infiniteneſſe of his love, the eternity of his love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greateſt wonder; But ſure, theſe three joyned togeather, make up a matchleſſe and everlaſting wonder. Would any of you aſk the Queſtion, What is Chriſt worth? Wee could give no anſwer ſo ſuitable as this, it is above all the Arithmetick of all the Angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, to calculate his worth, all men here muſt be put to a divine *non plus*; This was *Jobs* divinity, *Job* 28. 13. *Man knoweth not the price of wiſedome.* And muſt not Jeſus Chriſt who is the precious object of Faith, and wiſedome of the Father, bee a ſupereminent and excellent One, who hath that Name of *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, not onely ingraven on his veſture, (which pointeth out the conſpicuouſneſſe of his Majeſty) but even alſo upon his thigh, to point out that in all his goings and motions, hee proveth himſelf to bee higher then the Kings of the earth? And howbeit the naked propoſing of the object doth not convert, yet if once our ſouls were admitted to behold ſuch a ſight as Chriſt in his Beauty and Majeſty, and to bee ſatisfied with the divine rayes of his tranſcendent glory, then certainly

certainly wee should finde a blessed necessity laid upon us, of closing with him; for Christ hath a sword proceeding out of his precious mouth, by which hee doth subject and subjugate his own to himself, as well as hee hath a sword girded upon his thigh, by which hee judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. Wee confesse it is not only hard, but simply impossible to commit a Hyperbole in commending of him; His worth being alwayes so far above our expressions, and our expressions alwayes so far beneath his worth, therefore wee may be put to propose that desire unto him, *Exalt thy self, O Lord, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpose, being at this time to begin our discourse upon that radicall and precious grace of Faith, wee intend to speak of it under this twofold notion and consideration: First, We shall speak of it as it is justifying, *or as it doth lay hold upon the righteousnesse of a crucified Saviour, makeing application of the precious promises in the Covenant of free grace, which wee call justifying Faith.* And in the second place, we shall speak a little unto Faith, as *it doth lay hold upon Christs strength, for advancing the work of mortification, and doth discover the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, by which wee advance in the work of holinesse and divine conformity with God, which wee call sanctifying Faith.* However, it is not to bee supposed, that these are different habits of Faith, but different acts flowing from the same saving habit, laying hold and exercising themselves upon

upon Christ in different respects, and for diverse ends. Now to speak upon the first, we have made choice of these words. The Apostle *John*, in the former verse, hath been pointing out the precious advantages of the grace of obedience, and of keeping of his commands; that such a one hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God, and doth receive many precious returns of prayer: As likewise, that one who is exercised in the grace of repentance, is Gods delight: which is included in this, that he doth these things that are well pleasing in his sight. And now in these words hee doth, as it were, answer an objection that might bee proposed, about the impossibility of attaining these precious advantages, seeing his commands were so large, and that hardly could they bee remembered. This hee doth sweetly answer, by setting down in this one verse a short compend or breviary both of Law and Gospel, *viz.* *That wee should love one another*, which is the compend of the Law: and, *The we should believe on the Name of His Son*; which is the compend of the Gospel; And by this he sheweth the Christian, that there are not many things required of him, for attaining these excellent advantages; but if he exercise himself in the obedience of these two comprehensive commandments, he shall find favour both with God and man. And as concerning this precious grace of Faith, Wee have, 1. the advantages of it implied in the words, and clear also from the scope, as (no doubt) all the commands have infinit advan-

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tages infolded in their boſome, which redounds to a Believer, by his practiſing of them. And, 2. the excellency of it holden forth in the words, in that it is called, *His command*, as if hee had no other command but this. (And the Greek particle is here prefixed, which hath a great deal of emphaſis and force in it, Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ) But, 3. There is this alſo, the abſolute neceſſity of this grace, holden forth here in this word, *His Commandment*: as if he would have ſaid, by propoſing of this command, I do ſet life and death before you, and that ye would not conceive that it is an arbitrary and indifferent thing for you to believe, or not: But be perſwaded of this, that as an infinite advantage may conſtrain you to the obedience of it, ſo abſolute neceſſity muſt perſwade you to act that which is of your everlaſting concernment. And laſtly, Yee have the precious Object upon which Faith (which is juſtifying) doth exerciſe it ſelf, and that is upon the Name of the Son of God; And (no doubt) Faith is that excellent grace, which doth elevate the ſoul unto a ſweet and inſeparable union with Chriſt: and is that golden and precious knot, that doth eternally knit the hearts of theſe precious friends together. Faith is that grace that draweth the firſt draughts of Chriſts precious Image on our hearts, and by love doth accompliſh and perfite them. Now Faith taketh hold not onely on the faithfulneſſe of God, that hee is a God of truth, and that in him there is no lie: but likewiſe it taketh

taketh hold on the omnipotency of God, that hee is one to whom nothing is too hard: and on the infinite mercy and love of God, that hee is one who doth delight to magnifie this Attribute above all his works: And theſe are the three great pillars of juſtifying Faith. From the firſt, it anſwereth all theſe objections of ſenſe, which do ordinarily cry forth, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* And that with this one word, *If hee hath once purpoſed it, hee will alſo do it*, and if hee hath once *ſpoken it, hee will alſo make it come to paſſe.* From the ſecond, it anſwereth all theſe objections that may ariſe from carnal reaſon and probability, which tend to the weakning of his confidence; And theſe do oftentimes cry out, *How can theſe things be?* But Faith laying hold upon the omnipotency of God, *it ſtaggers not at the promiſe*, but is ſtrong *in the Faith, giving glory to God.* And it is the noble and divine exerciſe of this Heroick grace of Faith, that theſe objections of reaſon and probability, which it cannot anſwer, it will lay them aſide, and yet cloſe with the promiſe. Which was the practice of believing *Abraham*, who *conſidered not* his own body being weak, nor the barrenneſſe of *Sarahs* womb. As likewiſe, it was the commendable practice of that woman, *Matth.* 15. who not being able to anſwer the ſecond trial of her faith from reaſon, yet notwithſtanding, Faith made her cry out, *Have mercy upon mee, O Son of David.* And from the laſt, a Chriſtian doth anſwer all the arguments of miſbelief, which

which do arise from the convictions of our unworthinesse and sinfulnesse, which makes us oftentimes imbrace that divinity of *Peters*, Luk. 5. 8. *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* But Faith taking hold on the infinite mercy and love of Christ, it answereth all with this, He walks not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that precious and golden rule of love and boundlesse compassion.

But before we shall speak any thing unto you of these things, wee would a little point out some few things to be known as previous to these: we shall not dwell long in pointing out the nature of justifying Faith, it is that grace whereby a Christian being convinced of his lost estate, and of an utter impossibility to save himself, he doth flee to the righteousnesse of Jesus Christ, and unto him who is that precious City of refuge, and there doth abide till our High Priest shall die, which shall not be for ever. Or if ye will, it is a sweet travelling of the immortall soul, betwixt infinite misery, and infinite mercy, betwixt an utter impossibility to save our selves, and a compleat ability in him to *save to the uttermost*, betwixt abounding sin, and superabounding mercy. Hence Faith is often holden forth to us in Scripture, under that notion of coming, *Isa.* 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters.* Rev. 22. 17. *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,* Heb. 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him.* And we may

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say by the way, that if once a sinner could be brought to this, to count all his own righteousnesse but filthy rags, and to belive that a man is as really justified before God, by imputed righteousnesse, as if it were by inherent holinesse; surely such an one were not far from the Kingdom of God. Neither shall we stand long to point out this unto you, that it is your duty to believe, for it is clear, not only from this place, but likewise from *Isa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* Matth. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Joh. 14. 1. *Ye believe in God, belive also in me.* Isa. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, Come, buy without money and without price.* But Oh! it's a great misery of many (and that which may be a subject of perpetuall lamentation) that we can neither be subject to the Law, as commanding, to obey it, or as threatning, to believe it; Nor to the Gospel as promising, to imbrace it, and sweetly to receive it. O but that primitive temptation and delusion whereby *Sathan* did deceive our first father, is that whereby he yet seeks to catch and delude many souls, *viz.* That though we eat of the forbidden fruit, and walk in the vain imaginations of our own hearts, yet he doth suggest this to us, that we shall not die, but shall once be as God. This is *Sathans* great and deluding divinity; And therefore, to inforce this great and precious Command a little further

further, wee ſhall propoſe theſe conſiderations,

Firſt, That the Goſpel hath laid no obſtruction in our way of cloſing with Chriſt, and partaking of the effects of the Goſpel: but on the contrary, ſheweth that the great impediment is our want of willingneſſe, which wee lay in our own way: as is clear from *Joh.* 5. 40. *Yee will not come to mee that yee may get life*: as likewiſe from *Rev.* 22. 17. where the gates of the Goſpel are caſt open, *and whoſoever will*, are commanded to enter in: So that, although you may father your miſbelief upon your inability, or that your ſpot is not the ſpot of his people, yet know, that the riſe and originall of it is, the want of willingneſſe. But, to make this more clear, wee would have you knowing this, that all the qualifications annexed to this Commandement of Faith, as that in *Matth.* 11. 28. ſpeaketh out the qualifications rather of theſe that will come, than of all theſe that ought to come; Or hee inviteth theſe, that through the ſpirit of diſcouragement and miſbelief, have the greateſt reluctancy to come. And may not that cardinal and ſoul-refreſhing promiſe *Joh.* 6. 37. ſtop the mouth of miſbelief, ſo that it ſhould have nothing to ſay? *Him that cometh unto mee, I will in no wayes cast out.* Yee may reduce your miſbelief rather to the ſinfulneſſe of your will, than to the ſinfulneſſe of your walk; And if once yee could come the length of willingneſſe to imbrace Jeſus Chriſt, all other objections

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and knots ſhould be ſweetly looſed and diſſolved.

Secondly, Conſider, that though we ſhould pray the one half of our time, and weep the other, yet if we want this noble grace of Faith, the wrath of God ſhall abide on us. What are all the works of theſe hypocrites, and theſe gliſtring acts of Law-ſanctification, but a plunging of our ſelves in the ditch, untill our own cloaths abhorre us? Therefore it is, that after the Prophet *Zachary* hath made mention, in the 12. Chapter of his Propheſie, of making *bitter lamentation for him whom wee have pierced, as for an only Son*; Yet in the beginning of the 13. Chapter, he maketh mention of a *Fountain opened to the houſe of* David, *for ſin and for uncleanneſſe*: Which may intimate unto us, that, although we have waſhed our ſelves with our own teares, yet there is uſe of the blood of Chriſt, and that we muſt bee waſhed in that fountain, even from our *own righteouſneſſes, which are but as filthy rags.*

Thirdly, Conſider that great and monſtrous ſinfulneſs that is in this ſin of unbeleif, we will ſtrain at a gnat, but many will eaſily ſwallow down this Camel: we will tith Mint and Aniſe, and faſt twice in the week, but neglect faith and love, and judgment, which are the weightier things of the Law. And indeed, there are theſe things which ſpeak out the ſinfulneſſe of unbelief. 1. That when the holy Ghoſt is ſent to convince the world of ſin, *Joh.* 16. 9. he

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pitched upon this sin, as though there were no other sin of which the world had need to be convinced; *He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on the Son of God*: and (no doubt) there is more sinfulnesse in that sin, than in many breaches of the Morall Law, it being a sin against matchlesse love, and against that which is the remedy of sin. 2. That it is called by way of eminency, disobedience, as is clear from Heb. 4. 11. *Lest any of you fall after the same example of unbelief*: or as the word may be rendered, *Lest any of you fall after that example of disobedience*, Eph. 2. 2. 3. That among all these that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, these that are guilty of this sin of unbelief, they are put in the first place, *Rev.* 21. 8. And, 4. that unbelief doth contradict and deny these three precious and cardinall Attributes of God. 1. Doth not unbelief contradict his faithfulnesse, and make him a liar, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. 2. Doth it not contradict the infiniteneſſe of his power. And, 3. the infiniteneſſe of his love: and supposeth that there is something too hard for him, which his power cannot reach, nor his infinite love overcome. We may reduce many of our questions, and disputings of his good will, to this original, *viz.* to the disputing of his power. No doubt, if we belong to him, we shall once sing that note of lamentation over our unbelief, *This is our infirmity, for changes are from the right hand of the most High.*

And

And lastly, to enforce this precious command of Faith, consider that it is *His Command* which speaketh forth this, that we must not take an indulgence or dispensation to our selves, to believe, or not to believe at our pleasure. And is it not a strange thing, that Christians are lesse convinced of the breaches of the Commandements of Faith, then of other commands? They think misbelief to be but a *Zoar*, a little sin. And it proceedeth either from this, that the convictions of other sins (as the neglect of prayer, or the sin of swearing, or committing adultery) do arise from a natural conscience: (for there is somewhat of natures light to make us abominate and hate them, when yet the light of nature will not lead us to the convictions of the sinfulnesse of misbelief, it being a Gospel, and more spiritual sin.) Or it proceedeth from this, that unbelief doth ordinarily passe vail'd under the vizard of some refined vertue, as humility and tendernesse, though that rather it may be said, that it is pride and ignorance, cloathed with the garments of humility. And no doubt, Christ doth account it obedience to this Commandement of Faith, the greatest act of humility, as is clear from *Rom.* 10. 3. where it is called submission, they *submitted* not *to the righteousnesse of God*, Or else it proceedeth from this, that we conceive that the commandment of Faith, is not of so large extent as other commands, and so doth not bind us to the obedience of it. But know this, that it shall be the condemnation

demnation of the world, that they have not believed on the Name of the Son of God: And no doubt, but it is Sathans great design and cardinall project, to keep us back from obedience to the commandement of Faith, and that we should not listen to the precious promises of this everlasting Gospel, but should reject the counsel of God against ourselves, and refuse his precious and divine call.

The second previous consideration that we would give, shall bee to show you what are the causes that there is so much disputing of our interest, and so little believing, that we are unstable as water, marring our own excellency, spending so much of our time in walking under a cloud, and are so seldom admitted to read our names in these precious and eternall records of heaven? No doubt, these things have influence upon it, *viz.* 1. That we are more judging of God by his dispensations, then by His word, supposing ever the change of his dispensations to speak forth the change of our state. This is misbeliefs divinity, that when sense cannot read love in his face, but he appeareth to frown, and to cast a cloud over it, then it is presumption (saith sense) to read love in his heart, or in his word. But know it was a self-denying practice of Believing *Job*, to cry out, *Though he should kill me, I will believe in him.* Therefore make not dispensations your Bible, otherwise ye will stumble at the noon-tide of the day, and shall halt in your way. Knew ye not [illegible] never

never what such a thing as this meaned, to ascend in overcoming thoughts of his love, notwithstanding any thing that his dispensations might preach? We conceive, that if the eyes of our faith were opened, we might see infinite love engraven on the darkest acts and most dismal-like dispensations of his to us, though it bee oftentimes written in dark and dim characters of sense.

2 There is this likewise which hath influence upon our so much disputing and misbelieving, *viz.* a guilty conscience, and the entertainment of some predominant lust, which oftentimes occasioneth our walking in darknesse, and having no light: This is clear from 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. where that precious Jewel of Faith can bee holden in no other place but in a pure conscience, that is that royal palace wherein it must dwell; And no doubt, if once wee make *shipwrack of a good conscience*, wee will *erre concerning our faith.* A bosome idol, when it is intertained doth exceedingly mar the vigorous exercise of these graces, which are evidences of our Faith. And certainly, grace rather in its degrees, than in its sincerity or simple being merely, is that which giveth the clear evidence of Faith. Therefore when we find not love in its high and eminent actings, wee hardly win to make it any clearly concluding demonstration of our Faith.

3. As likewise, a bosome idol, when it is entertained, maketh use to lose much of our high esteem and reputation of Jesus Christ; which doth exceedingly interrupt the sweet

and precious actings of Faith. For it is certain, that if once the immortal ſoul be united to Jeſus Chriſt by the bond of love and reſpect, then our Faith will increaſe with the increaſe of God. Our intertainment of a boſom idol is ordinarily puniſhed with the want of the ſenſible intimations of his peace, and of our intereſt in him; So that ſometimes his own are conſtrained to cry out, *God hath departed from mee, and he anſwereth mee not, neither by dreams nor viſions.*

4. There is that likewiſe that hath influence upon it, our not cloſing abſolutely with Jeſus Chriſt, but upon conditions and ſuppoſitions. We make not an abſolute and blank reſignation of our ſelves over unto Chriſt, to hold faſt the Covenant, notwithſtanding hee ſhould diſpenſe both bitter and ſad things to us; But wee conceive that Chriſts Covenant with believers, is like that Covenant that *God* made with *Noah*, that there ſhould bee ſummer and winter, ſeed time and harveſt, night and day, unto a Chriſtian. A Chriſtian muſt have his night as well as his day: hee muſt once ſowe in tears, before hee reap in joy; and hee muſt once go forth, bearing his precious ſeed, before hee can return bearing his ſheaves in his boſome: and that this hath influence upon our inſtability, may bee ſeen from this, That often a Chriſtian, after his firſt cloſing with Chriſt, hee meeteth with deſertion in point of tenderneſſe, in point of joy, and in point of ſtrength, ſo that his corruptions ſeem now to be awaked more then formerly, the

hee wants those seeming injoyments of him which formerly he had: And that much of his softnesse of heart hath now evanished, which is clear somewhat from *Heb.* 10. 32. *That after they were enlightened, they endured a great fight of afflictions.* For the word that is there rendered *afflictions*, signifieth inward troubles through the motions of sinne, as well as outward afflictions, *Gal.* 5. 24. And God useth to dispense this way to his own, not only to take trial of the sincerity of our closing with him, but to make our faith more stedfast and sure. And no doubt, if we close not absolutely with Christ (when under these temptations and trials) we will reject our confidence as a delusion, and suppose it to bee but a morning dream; therefore it were a noble and divine practice of a Christian to close with Christ without reservation, seeing hee doth dispence nothing but that which may tend to our advantage. And we would say to such as are under these temptations, that if yee endeavour to resist them, it is the most compendious and excellent way to make your hearts, which now are *dying as a stone*, to bee as a *watered Garden, and as springs of water, whose waters fail not, and to make you strong as a Lion*, so that no temptation can rouse you up, but you shall bee enabled to *tread upon the high places of the earth*, and to sing songs of triumph over your Idols.

5. There is this likewise which hath influence on it, or building of our faith more upon sense then upon Christ or his Word;

and therefore it is, that Faith is ſo unconſtant and changeable as the Moon, we not knowing what ſuch a thing meaneth, *To hope againſt hope, and to bee ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God*: And we would onely ſay unto you, that erect your confidence upon ſo ſandy a foundation, that when the ſtorm and wind of tentation ſhall blow, *That houſe ſhall fall to the ground.* As likewiſe, building of your faith upon ſenſe, doth abate much of your joy, and much of your precious eſteem of Jeſus Chriſt, it being faith exerciſing it ſelf upon an inviſible object, that maketh the Chriſtian, *to rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

6. There is this laſt that hath influence upon it, even our ſloathfulneſſe in the exerciſe of our ſpiritual duties, by which Faith ſhould bee entertained. Faith is a tender grace and a plant that muſt not be ruffled, but nouriſhed through the ſap of other precious graces; but wee grow remiſſe in our ſpiritual duties, and do turn our ſelves upon the bed of ſecurity, as the door upon the hinges. And doth not our drowſineſſe cloath us with rags, and make us fall into a deep ſleep; while as, if wee were diligent, *Our ſouls ſhould bee made fat and rich?* Yea ſloathfulneſſe doth not only impede aſſurance in this, that it hindereth the divine communications of his love and reſpect, by which aſſurance may bee keeped in life, *Cant.* 5. 2. But alſo, *it maketh our poverty come on us as an armed man, and our want as one that travelleth.* And withall, it letteth looſe the chain

chain by which our corruptions are tyed, and maketh them to lift up their head, by which our assurance is much darkned and impaired, and our hope is much converted into diffidence and dispair: And we would only say this, it is the diligent Christian that is the believing Christian; and it is the believing Christian, that is the diligent Christian; there being such a sweet reciprocation betwixt these two precious graces, that they die and live together.

Now thirdly, we shall shut up our discourse with this, in pointing out a little what are those things that do obstruct a Christians closing with Christ, and believing in his precious Name.

I. We conceive that this wofull evil doth spring and rise from that fundamentall ignorance of this truth, that there is a God: as is clear from *Heb.* 11. 6. where that is required as a qualification of a Comet, *That he should believe that God is*: And assuredly, till once this precious truth be imprinted upon our souls, *as with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond*, we will look upon the Gospel as an Utopian fancy, and a deluding notion, to teach unstable souls, who know not the way to attain unto real blessednesse. And truly it is a fault in many, that they begin to dispute their being in Christ, before they know there is a Christ: and to dispute their interest in him before they believe his being, and that there is such a one as is called Christ.

II. Our coming unto Christ is obstructed

from the want of the real and spiritual convictions of our desperate and lost estate without Jesus Christ, and that our unspeakable misery is the want of him; which is clear from *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more to thee*: And it is evident from *Rev.* 3. 16, 18. That such a delusion as this doth overtake many, that they can reign as Kings without Jesus Christ, and that they can build their happiness, and establish their eternal felicity upon another foundation. But, O that we could once win to this, to believe what we are without Christ, and to believe what we shall be in the enjoyment of him; with the one eye to descend and look upon these deep draughts, that the mystery of iniquity hath imprinted upon your immortal souls, and withall to reflect upon the wages of sin, which is death; and be constrained to cry out, *Wo is me, for I am undone*: And with the other eye to ascend and look to that help that is *laid upon One that is mighty*, and to make use of the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, that so what we want in our selves, we may get it abundantly made up in him.

III. There is this likewise that obstructeth our closing with Christ, our too much addictedness to the pleasures and carnal delights of a passing world; which is clear from *Luk.* 14. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. *Matth.* 22. 5, 6. where these that were invited to come to the feast of this Gospel, they do make their apologie, and with one consent do refuse it: some pretending an impossibility to

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come, and ſome pretending an unavoidable inconveniency in coming: And O! What a rediculous thing is that poor complement, that theſe deluded ſinners uſed to Chriſt, I *pray you have us excuſed?* And is it not the world the great plea and argument, that they make uſe of, When they will not come and make uſe of Chriſt?

IV. There is this laſtly, which doth obſtruct ones coming to Chriſt, their unwillingneſs to be denyed to their own righteouſneſs: Which is clear from *Rom.* 10. 23. And wee conceive if once theſe two were believed (which are the great Tropicks, out of which all theſe arguments may be brought to perſwade you to imbrace Chriſt) to wit, the infinite excellency of His perſon on whom we are to believe, and the infinite loſſe that theſe do ſuſtain, who ſhall be eternally rejected of him. We might be perſuaded to entertain a divine abſtractedneſſe and holy retirement from all things that are here below, and to pitch our deſires alone upon him, *who is the everlaſting wonder of Angels, and the glory of the higher Houſe.* O did we once ſuppoſe the unſpeakable happineſſe of theſe whoſe Faith is now advanced unto everlaſting felicity and fruition, and hath entered into that eternal poſſeſſion of the promiſes: might we not be conſtrained to cry out, *It is good for us once to be there?* Chriſt weepeth to us in the Law, but we do not lament: and he pypeth to us in the Goſpel, but we do not dance: He is willing to draw us *with the cords of men, and with*

the bonds of love, and yet we will not have him to reign over us. May not Angels laugh at our folly, that wee ſhould ſo undervalue this Prince of love, and ſhould contemn him who is holden in ſo high eſteem and reverence in theſe two great Aſſemblies that are above, of Angels, and of the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect? Chriſt hath now given us the firſt and ſecond Summonds, the day is approaching when the ſad and wofull ſummonds ſhall be ſent againſt us, of *departing from him, into theſe everlaſting flames*, out of which there is no redemption: and this ſhall be the capeſtone of our miſery, that we had once life in offer, but did refuſe it; And though there were four gates ſtanding open toward the north, by which we might have entered into that everlaſting reſt, yet we chooſed rather *to walk in the paths that lead down to death, and take hold of the chambers of hell.* O but there are many that think the Goſpel cunningly deviſed fables and fooliſhneſſe, (they being unwilling to believe that which ſenſe cannot comprehend, nor reaſon reach) and this is the reaſon why the Goſpel is not imbraced, but is rejected as a humane invention, and as a morning dream, *&c.*

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SERMON II.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

THere are three great and cardinall myſteries, in the unfolding of which, all a Chriſtians time ought to be ſpent. Firſt, There is that precious and everlaſting myſtery of Chriſts love and condiſcendency, which thoſe intellectual ſpirits, the Angels, are not able fully to comprehend. Secondly, There is that woefull myſtery of the deſperate deceitfulneſſe and wickedneſſe of the heart, which no man was ever yet able fully to fathom and comprehend. And, thirdly, there is that precious myſtery of that eternal felicity and bleſſedneſſe that is purchaſed unto the Saints, that once they ſhall reign with Chriſt, not a thouſand years only, but throughout all the ages of everlaſting and endleſs eternity: ſo that there is this difference betwixt the Garden of everlaſting delights, that Chriſt hath purchaſed to the Saints, and that firſt Paradiſe and Eden wherein man was placed: There was a ſecret gate in the firſt, thorow which a man that had once entered in, might go out again; But in this ſecond and precious Eden, there is no acceſſe for going out. And all that is to be known of theſe three myſteries, is much

comprehended in this, to know that they cannot fully be known; *Paul* was a blessed proficient in the study of the first mystery, and had almost attained to the highest Classe of knowledge, and yet he is constrained to professe himself to bee ignorant of this: Hence is that word, *Eph.* 3. 19. *That ye may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.* And is it not a mysterious command, to desire people to know that which cannot be known? The meaning whereof we conceive to be this in part, that *Paul* pressed this upon them, that they should study to know that this mystery of Christs love could not be known. *Jeremiah* was a blessed proficient in the knowledge and study of the second mystery, he had some morning and twilight discoveries of that, and yet though in some measure he had fathomed that deep; yet he is constrained to cry out, chap. 17. vers. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And indeed, that which *Solomon* saith of Kings, *Prov.* 25. 3. may well be said of all men in this respect, *The heavens for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of man is unsearchable.* The Apostle *Paul* also was a blessed proficient in the study of the third mystery, having some morning and twilight discoveries of that promised rest, and was once caught up to the third heavens, and yet when he is beginning to speak of it, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. he declareth all men to be ignorant of the knowledge of this profound mystery of mans blessednesse, and cryeth

cryeth out, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* And if there bee any thing further to bee known of these mysteries, the grace of Faith is found worthy among all the graces of the Spirit, *To open the seven seals* of these great deeps of God. Is not the grace of Faith that whereby a Christian doth take up the invisible excellency and vertue of a dying Christ? Is not Faith that precious grace by which a Christian must take up the spots and blemishes that are within himself? And is not the grace of Faith, that precious grace that placeth a Christian upon the top of mount *Pisga*, and there letteth him see a sight of the promised Land? And doth open a door in Heaven, thorow which a Christian is admitted to see Christ sitting upon His Throne? And Faith hath not only a kind of Omnipotency; as is clear, *That all things are possible to them that believe*: but it hath a kind of Omniscience, and all knowledge that it can take up and comprehend the greatest mysteries of heaven, according to that word, *Prov.* 28. 5. *He that seeketh the Lord shall understand all things*, As if hee said, there is nothing dark to a believing Christian, as there is nothing impossible to a believing Christian. As likewise, Faith is that grace that must take aside the vail that is spread over the face of a crucified Christ. And Faith is that precious spy that goeth forth, and taketh up these wonderfull excellencies, that are in him. The grace

of love, as it were, is born blind, and it hath nothing wherewith to solace it self, but that which is presented unto it by this noble and excellent grace of Faith.

Now before wee shall speak any thing to these things that wee did propose to speak of it at the last occasion: wee shall yet speak a little unto some things which are necessary to be known, for the distinct uptaking of the nature of justifying Faith; which is the great commandement of this everlasting Gospel: and that which wee would first speak to shall be this. What is the reason and ground that the Gospel conveyance of righteousnesse and life, (and of the excellent things of this everlasting Covenant) should be through the exercise of the grace of Faith? For it is not said in the Scripture that repentance justifieth, that love justifieth, or that mortification justifieth; but it is Faith only that justifieth, and it is Faith by which a Christian inheriteth the promises, so that is clear, that Faith is that Conduit-pype, through which are conveyed to us the great blessings of this everlasting Covenant.

I. And the first ground of it is this, it is through *Faith, that all our blessings may be known to be by love, and by free and unsearchable grace*; as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 16. While the Apostle is giving a reason why the inheritance is conveyed to a Christian through Faith; *It is of faith* (saith he) *that it might be of grace*: for if the inheritance were conveyed to a Christian through a Covenant of Works

Works, then these spotlesse draughts of infinite love, and of unsearchable grace, should not be written on our inheritance, as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 25. And it is that great designe of Christ, to make his grace conspicuous in conveying salvation to us through Faith.

II. There is this second ground likewise of it, that all the promises and blessings of this everlasting Covenant might be sure and stedfast to us, therefore they are conveyed to us through the exercise of the grace of Faith; as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 16. *They are of Faith* (saith he) *that they might be sure:* or as the word is, *that they might be settled*, when the promises of life and of eternal salvation were conveyed to us through mans obedience, were they not then most uncertain and unstable? But is not heaven your everlasting crown now, stedfast unto you, seeing you have that golden pillar of Christs everlasting righteousnesse to be the foundation of your Faith, and the strength of your confidence in the day of need?

III. There is this third ground why the promises and excellent things of this Gospel are conveyed to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, that all boasting and glorification might be excluded, according to that word, *Rom.* 3. 27. *By what law is boasting excluded? Not by the law of works, but by the law of Faith.* And certainly, seeing Christians have all the great things of heaven conveyed to them through the exercise of Faith; think yee not, that this shall be your first song when yee shall be within the

gates.

gates of that new Jerusalem? *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory of our salvation.* O what a precious dignity were it, but for one half hour to be admitted to hear these sportlesse songs that are sung by these thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of holy Angels, that are round about His Throne! Doth not *David* that sweet singer of Israel, now sing more sweetly nor he did while he was here below? Doth not deserted *Heman* now chaunt forth the praises and everlasting song of him that sitteth upon the Throne? And doth not afflicted *Job* now sing sweetly after his captivity is reduced, and he *entered within that land, where the voice of joy and gladnesse is continually heard?* Would ye have a description of Heaven? I could give it no tearm so suitable as this, Heaven is a rest without a rest, for though there remain a rest for the righteous, yet *Rev.* 4. 8. *These four beasts that stand before the Throne, they rest not night nor day, crying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty*; yet there is much divine quietnesse in that holy unquietnesse that is above.

IV. There is this last ground why the blessings of the Gospel, and life and righteousnesse are conveyed to us thorow the exercise of Faith, that the way to attain to these things might be pleasant and easie; we are certainly perswaded, that the way of winning to Heaven by a Covenant of Works was much more unpleasant and difficult. But is it not an easie way of *entring*

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into the holy of Holies, to win unto it through the exercise of Faith? *Are not all wisdoms wayes pleasantnesse, and are not all her paths peace?* Was not that just self-denial in one, that said, he would not take up a Crown though it were lying at his foot. But oh that cursed self-denial doth possesse the breasts of many; so that though that Crown of immortal Glory and eternal blessednesse be lying at your feet, yet ye will not imbrace it, nor take it up. Is not the hatred of many to Christ covered with deceit, and therefore, *Your iniquity shall be declared before the Congregation.*

Now that what we have spoken upon this, might be more clear, and that the nature of justifying Faith be not mistaken, We would have you taking notice of these things,

1. That the grace of Faith doth not justifie a Christian, as it is a work; or because of any inherent excellency and dignity that is in this grace, above any other graces of the Spirit; but Faith doth alone justifie a Christian instrumentally and objectively; that is, it is that by which a Christian is just, by laying hold on the precious object of it, the righteousnes of Christ. And to clear this, we would only have you knowing this, That Faith doth justifie, as it closeth with Christ; but not because it closes with Christ, which some vainly are bold to assert; because there is not any dignity or worth in the act of Faith, in closing with Christ that can be the foundation of our justification, else it were to confound that precious decreet of free grace.

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2. There is this that we would have you all knowing; That Faith is not the instrument of Justification, (as Justification is taken in an active sense,) though it is the instrument of Justification, as it is taken in a passive sense: and the ground of this conclusion is this, because it is impossible that any action in man can be an instrument of any action in God: And therefore that phrase that you have so ordinarily spoken of, *That Faith justifieth*, it is thus to be resolved, *That we are justified by Faith.*

3. There is this that we would have you knowing, that betwixt a Christians closing by Faith with the righteousnesse of Jesus Christ, and the justification of a sinner, I say, there is no natural and indispensible connexion betwixt these two: but onely there is a connexion of divine appointment, and of free grace, though we conceive there is a natural aptitude in the grace of Faith, to lay hold on the righteousnesse of Christ, more then there is in any other grace of the Spirit, as ye may see there is a more natural aptitude and fitnesse in the hand to receive then in any other organ of the body.

4. There is this also that we would have you knowing, that a Christian in his first closing with Christ, Christ (considered as crucified) is the immediate object of his Faith, and not Christ considered in his personal excellencies. Hence it is often in Scripture, that Christ as crucified, is holden forth as the immediate object of justifying Faith; as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 5, 24, 25. And the ground of

of this assertion is this, because that it is the formall object of justifying Faith, which doth formally justifie the sinner; and on which Faith doth immediately lay hold as a ransome to satisfie justice, and as a righteousnesse in which the soul dare venture to be found when it shall stand before the Judgement seat of God; And certainly, this is Christ as obedient to the death of the crosse. And it is likewise clear, that the thing which doth engage the soul to Christ, is not onely because he is good in himself, but because he is good to us.

5. And there is this lastly, that we would have you knowing, That though faith doth alone justifie, yet Faith doth not justifie being alone: Hence is that which we have so often in Schooles, *Fides justificat solum, licet non solitariè*, that Faith justifieth alone, though not being alone; as *James* doth speak, *Faith without works is dead, and is of no effect.*

Now that which secondly we shall speak to, shall be this; To point out to you some differences betwixt justifying Faith, which is in a real Believer, and temporary Faith which is in an Hypocrite, and one that is destitute of that everlasting hope, though he do pretend to have it.

And first, That there is such a thing as temporary Faith, is clear from *Luk.* 8. 13. It is said there of some, *That they believed for a season*, yea, in *Acts* 8. 13. It is said of *Simon Magus* (who was in the gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of iniquity) *he believed*,

lieved. And these in *Joh* 2. 23. *When they did behold the miracles, they believed on Jesus Christ*: and yet we conceive, that their faith was not sincere, and so this was not saving Faith. And indeed ye may see a difference betwixt these two in the very name *temporary*; for this is such a Faith as doth not continue long with him that hath it, but doth evanish and passe away; for as this is certain, *that an hypocrite will not always call upon God, Job* 27. 10. So that is also certain, that a hypocrite will not alwayes believe in God. I tell you, that the longest time a hypocrite doth keep his Faith, *Job* hath set down in his 18. Chap. vers. 14. *Their hope* (saith he) *shall bring them to the king of terrours, and then it shall be rooted out of them and their tabernacle*; their faith will bring them no further then the gates of death, and then their faith will flee away as a dream, and evanish as a vision of the night.

II. There is this difference likewise betwixt them, That temporary Faith, it closeth with Christ as a Saviour, and for righteousnesse, but it closeth not with Christ as a Prince, and for Sanctification; but justifying Faith taketh Christ as well for a Prince, as it taketh him for a Saviour: and if *Solomon* did discern who was the true Mother of the childe by that, that she who would have the childe divided, was not the mother of the childe; so we may say, that they who would divide Christ in his Offices, it is an evidence that they are not among these who are actually made partakers of the Adoption of children

dren; there is somewhat of this pointed at in *Joh.* 6. 66. where that which made many who were his disciples (and did once believe) desert him, was because of the hardness of his command, *This is an hard saying, who can hear it?* And it is certain that it is a greater difficulty for a Christian to take Christ as a Prince, then as a Saviour: for by that he must make an absolute resignation of himself over to Christ, never to be reduced. O when saw you such a sight of Christ, that ye were constrained to cry out (without a complement) to him; *Truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant?* O were ye never *ravished with one of his eyes*, nor overtaken *with one chain of his neck*? Believe me, they who see him thus, do believe that *His commands are not grievous.*

III. There is this difference, that temporary Faith is attained unto, without the exercise of the Law, but justifying Faith is not attained to without some measure of the exercise of the Law: this is clear, *Mark* 4. 5. where speaking of these temporary believers, it is said of them, *that the fruit did immediately spring up, &c.* Are there not some (it may be here) who think they do believe, and yet were never in any measure trembling under the discovering & condemning power of the Law? Is not that a mystery, that one should bring forth without travelling? And is not this a mystery in Christianity, that one should believe before he hath found the pangs of the New-birth. I am afraid of this, that many of us have taken up our Religion at our foot: for there are many who take up Religion before

fore Religion take them up. But would ye know the properties of a Christians Faith? *It is a begotten Faith*, 1 Pet. 1. 2. and not a Faith that is taken up at our pleasure: And I would only say these two things to you, be perswaded of this, that hypocrisie may be spun with a verp small threed: so that the most discerning Christian cannot take up that desperate enmity that is in them. How long did *Judas* lurk under the name of a Saint, even with these that were most discerning? And there is this that we would say, that among all these *that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, Hypocrites in Sion shall have the bitterest cup of Divine indignation presented unto them. Hence it is, that Christ, when he would tell the worst company that one shall have in hell, it is alwayes this: ye shall go to that place where hypocrites and sinners are: and so it would be of your concernment, that by the candle of the Lord ye would *search the inward parts of the belly, before ye go down to the grave with a lie in your right hand; a deceiving heart having turned you aside.* We confesse it is sad to consider these anxious disappointments that many in those dayes shall once meet with.

IV. But there is this last difference betwixt justifying Faith, and temporary Faith, That there are three precious effects of justifying Faith, which a temporary believer cannot win to.

1. To be denyed to all his enjoyments and attainments, and walk humbly under them, for

for we may say, that it is impossible for an hypocrite to be denyed to his enjoyments, he maketh such a deity of them, and worships them, or rather he worshippeth himself in them. There are three great graces that a hypocrite doth pursue after, (though he rather seeketh them as gifts than as graces:) Knowledge, Prayer, and Humility: And though it be but little that he can attain of any of the three, (or rather nothing in a saving way) yet least of all can he attain to the last, yea, we may judge that there is alwayes within his bosome a standing conviction, that he could never win unto that gracious grace of humility. O could ye never win to this, to count your own righteousnesse as filthy rags, and to rejoice alone in the righteousnesse of a crucified Saviour? I would press this upon you by the way (O Christians of this generation) forget your perfections; and remember your imperfections; have a holy oblivion of your attainments, but have a Divine remembrance of your short comings, look more to what is before unperfected, nor to what is behind, and thus shall you evidence true justifying Faith.

2. It is an effect of justifying Faith to be under some constant and Divine impression of the preciousnesse of Jesus Christ, according to that word, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you who believe, Christ is precious*; It is not said, that Christ was precious, or shall be precious, but it is said, *He is precious*, which doth import, (as we use to speak) a continued act; Did ye never

never know what it was to dwell twenty four hours under the impression of the matchlesse excellency and precious worth of a crucified Saviour? I will pose you with this. Are there not some here (and elsewhere) that passe under the notion of Saints, that never knew what it was to dwell half an hour under these high and elevating thoughts of the preciousnesse of Jesus Christ? So that wee professe we cannot tell whether we shall call him precious or undervalued: but wee may conjoyn these two names together; that he is precious (and yet) undervalued Christ.

3. By true justifying Faith, a Christian winneth to mortification of his invisible and predominant lusts, which is impossible for a temporary Believer to win to. And is there not a great difference betwixt an Idol when it is cast out, and an Idol when it goeth out? I will tell you the great mortification of hypocrites, the devil was living in them as one that was a black one, and now hee cometh again and transformeth himself into an Angel of light: He was living in them before by his spirit of profanity, and now hee liveth in them by the spirit of hypocrisie, and counterfeiting of these things that were never clear attainments, while it is the noble dignity of Faith, *Act.* 15.9. *To purifie the heart.* But are there not many here who never knew what it was to mortifie one lust for Christ? Can such a delusion overtake you O Athiests! That ye shall reign with Christ, if ye die not with him? There is an opinion vented in these dayes, that there may be repentance in heaven,

heaven, and I think it would seem that the Christians of this age have much of that opinion, we are so little in repentance while we are here below: but know that Faith and Sanctification are two inseparable companions: And let me tell you, if ye would know the compend of the precious exercise of Faith? It is this, Faith hath three great things, that it perpetually contemplates and views. 1. Faith looketh to the promise, and there it doth rejoyce and rest upon it. 2. Faith looketh to the duties that are commanded, and there it cryeth out, *Here am I, I will obey and hearken unto the voice of the word.* And, 3. Faith looketh to the crown, and there it doth exult and sweetly rejoyce in divine expectation. And O what a sight is that, to behold that everlasting Prince standing at the end of our race, having a crown in his right hand, with this Motto ingraven on it, *Hee that persevereth to the end shall be saved?* And what a Faith suppose yee shall it be thought when wee shall get on that immortal Crown of blessednesse? What think ye is the exercise of these that are above? O heaven, heaven, if we did know it, would we not be in a holy extasie of desire, till we were there! And blessed be he eternally, that hath purchased that precious felicity to us.

Now we shall at this time shut up our discourse, by speaking a little to these things, in which a Christian doth ordinarily meet with assurance of his interest in God, and is put to the divine actings of the grace of Faith, for there are some sealing times to a Christian.

I. The

I. The first time of the sealing is, after the mortification of some predominante lust and idol, then they are admitted to read their names in these precious and ancient records of heaven, and to see (in these Books) their unworthy names written by the hand of that everlasting Prince. This is clear, *Rev.* 2. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knows, saving he that receiveth it.* And from that 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. Believe mee, more mortification would make more believing, but would ye know the original of misbelief? It is the want of exercise of spiritual mortification of our lusts. I know not where the most part of us intendeth to lodge at night, but this is certain, that wee live with much contentment with our lusts, and these predominant idols that doth so much possesse us.

II. It is readily a sealing time to a Christian, when hee is admitted to the divine enjoyment of these satisfying delights that are to be found in Christ: When was it that the Spouse cryed out so often, *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* Was it not *when she was brought to the banqueting house, and his banner over her was love?* Believe mee, more communion with an absent Christ, would make more intimation (in a divine manner) of our peace with him: wee desire to blesse these that are above the reach of all these disputings, and questionings that wee are so much subject unto.

III. This is a sealing time to a Christian, when hee is much in the exercise of secret [illegible]ayer,

Prayer, and of much converſing, and correſponding with God in that duty, as is clear from that word in *Dan.* 9. 21. when *Daniel* was praying at the evening oblation, in the 23. verſe he meets with a divine intimation of his peace with God, *O man greatly beloved of God*; as the Original hath it, *O man of great deſires*; for he was deſirable indeed, and precious to him who holdeth the Saints in his right hand.

IV. This is alſo a ſealing-time to a Chriſtian, when hee is called to the exerciſe of ſome great work, and is to be put upon ſome eminent holy employment, this is clear, *Jer.* 1. 5. Where *Jeremiah* being called to preach the Goſpel unto ſuch a rebellious people, then hee hath this eternal election declared unto him: *Before thou waſt formed in the womb, I knew thee*; Chriſt, as it were, giveth them that, to be meat to them for fourty dayes, and that in the ſtrength of it, they may go many a dayes journey.

V. There is alſo another ſealing-time: When a Chriſtian is firſt begotten to a precious and everlaſting hope: for when at firſt Chriſtians begin to be acquaint with Chriſt, even then ſometimes he declareth to them his boundleſs and everlaſting love: And that is the ground why ſome of thoſe who are but babes in Chriſt, are ſo much in the exerciſe of diligence, ſo much in the exerciſe of the grace of love, and ſo much in the exerciſe of the grace of tenderneſſe, it is even becauſe of the ſolemn impreſſion of their intereſt in Chriſt, that, as it were, they are daily taken in to read their own

names in legible letters, in the Lambs book of life.

VI. And there is this last time, that is a sealing time to a Christian, and that is, when he is put under some sad and afflicting dispensation: *When the furnace is hot seven times more then ordinary*, Then doth God condescend to manifest himself to his own: When was it that *John* met with most of the revelations of Heaven? Was it not when hee was *in the Isle of Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus Christs Kingdom, and patience of our blessed Lord*? *Rev.* 1. 9. And in that place, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.*

Now wee would presse you to bee more serious in the exercise of this precious grace. And I shall tell you the compend of Christianity in these few words. 1. By faith to solace your selves in Christs invisible vertues and excellencies. And, 2. by hope, to bee viewing that precious Crown, and these everlasting dignities that are to bee given to the Saints. And, 3. by mortification, to be crucifying your idols. And, 4. by patience to bee possessing your souls, untill once ye shall passe through that dark land, to that valley of everlasting delight. And as for those that contemne, and undervalue the bloud of this everlasting Covenant (and I would have all these that delight not in closing with Christ, and these who have no misbelief as their crosse, to consider this) *The wrath of the living and eternal God doth abide upon them who do not believe*, accordin

o that word, *Joh.* 3. 36. *He that believeth ot, the wrath of God abideth on him.* It is a emarkable phraſe; becauſe of this the wrath f God will not bee a Pilgrime to a miſhbe-iever, that will turn aſide to tarry but for night, but the wrath of God (to them who vill not believe) ſhall bee their houſhold ompanion, and ſhall dwell with them; and vo, wo to them eternally, who have this ſad nd everlaſting companion to abide with hem, *the wrath of a living God.* There is one thing we would have theſe knowing, that mong all theſe who are eternally to bee de-arred from Jeſus Chriſt, miſbelievers are put n the foremoſt rank, *Rev.* 21 8. There he is to ut away *the fearful and unbelieving.* And om 2 *Theſſ* 1.18. *When Chriſt ſhall come from eaven with ten thouſand of his Saints,* (What o do) It is even *to execute vengeance on thoſe hat obey not the truth of the Goſpel:* that is, who do not believe. And I poſe your own earts with this, whether or not your names ee written there in that roll, among theſe who ſhall be cut off? And that word, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 12. *That they might be damned who believed ot, but took pleaſure in unrighteouſneſſe.* O but he wrath of a dying Chriſt, and of a crucifi-d Saviour is dreadful! It is more ſad and ter-ible then the wrath of God ſhould have been Chriſt had not died. I will tell you (O ypocrites in Sion) the worſt news that ever were publiſhed in your ears, and it is this, Chriſt died and roſe again, (and to thoſe that rebegotten to a lively hope, they are glad idings of great joy, and therein they may

comfort themſelvs) but ye may wear a rough garment to deceive, and go to heaven in your own apprehenſion: But, O the ſad diſappointment that is waiting on many ſuch. And to cloſe with this, we would obteſt you, as ye would anſwer to your terrible & dreadfull Judge, that ſhall ſtand one day upon his Throne, which he ſhall fix in the clouds, we obteſt you by all the joyes of heaven, and we obteſt you by all the everlaſting pains of hell, and we obteſt you by all the curſes that are written within the volume of this Book, and by all the ſweet & comfortable promiſes that are in this everlaſting Goſpel, and by the love that ye owe to your immortal ſouls, and as ye would not crucifie Chriſt afreſh, believe, and imbrace the offers which are preſented now unto you. Know ye whether or not this ſhall be the laſt ſummonds that ye ſhall get to believe? That ſo, if ye do reject it, Chriſt ſhall come from heaven, and pronounce that ſad and lamentable ſentence to you, *Depart from me ye curſed, I know you not.* Now, to him that can bleſſe theſe things to you, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON III.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

IT was a command that *Solomon* gave unto his Son, *Prov.* 22. 26. *That he ſhould not be ſurety for debt, nor ſhould be one of thoſe that ſtricketh hands*; But, O! what ſpot-

ſpotleſſe breaches of that Command hath our bleſſed Lord Jeſus committed, when he did condeſcend to be ſurety for our debt, and to pay that, that was impoſſible for us to ſatisfie? Hath not Chriſt made a precious exchange with ſinners? He wreathed about his own precious neck, that bond and yoke of our iniquities, and hath given to us that unweariable, eaſie, and portable yoke of his Commandements; among which this is one, *That wee ſhould believe on him.* Spotleſſe Chriſt *was made ſin for us*, that ſinful we *might be made the righteouſneſſe of God in him:* And is not this the condemnation of the world, *that we will not believe in him?* that wee will not delight our ſelves in loving of Him (And I would ſay this to you, that though you ſhould weep the one half of your dayes, and pray the other half, yet, if ye want this noble grace of Faith, *Your righteouſneſſe ſhall be but like a menſtruous cloath and filthy rags before him:* for what is praying without believing, but a taking of His bleſſed Name in vain? What is our conferring upon the moſt divine and precious Truths of God, without believing? Is it not a lying to the holy Ghoſt, and a flattering of God with our mouth? And we would have you knowing this, that there is a ſweet harmony that is now made up betwixt *Moſes* and Chriſt, betwixt the Law and the Goſpel. The Law bringeth us to Chriſt as a Saviour, and Chriſt bringeth us back again to the Law to be a rule of our walk, to which we muſt ſubject our ſelves. So then,

would ye know the compend of a Christians walk? *It is a sweet travelling betwixt mount Sinai and mount Sion, betwixt* Moses *and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel.* And we conceive that the more deep that the exercise of the Law be in a Christians conscience, before his closing with Christ, there is so much the more precious and excellent advantages waiting for him.

I. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law: that it is the way to win to much establishment in the Faith, when once we begin to close with Christ. O Christians, would ye know that which maketh the superstructure and building of grace to be within you, *as a bowing wall, and as a tottering fence?* (So that oftentimes ye are in hazard to raze the foundation) it is this, Yee were not under the exercise of the Law before your believing in Jesus Christ. There are some who do not abide three dayes at mount *Sinai*, and these shall not dwell many dayes at mount *Sion.*

II. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, it maketh Christ precious to a mans soul. What is that which filleth the soul of a Christian with many high and excellent thoughts of Christ? Is it not this, to have the Law registrating our Band, and putting us (as we use to speak) to the horn? that is, to have the Law cursing us, and using the sentence of condemnation against us. That which maketh us have such low and undervaluing thoughts of precious Christ, is, because

the most part of us are not acquainted with the deep and serious exercise of the Law: that is a mystery to the most part of Christians practice. Ye know that there were four streams which went out from the Paradise of God, into which man was first placed: And so we may say, that there are four golden streams, by which lost and destroyed man is brought back again to this Eden and Paradise of everlasting delights. First, there is the precious stream of Christs righteousnesse, by which we must be justified. And secondly, There is that stream of his Sanctification, by which we must be purified. Thirdly, There is that stream of the Wisedom of Christ, by which we must be conducted through this wilderneſſe wherein we have lost our way. And fourthly, There is that stream of Christs Redemption, by which we must be delivered from the power of our enemies, and must turn the Battel in the gate. It is by the Redemption of Christ that we shall once sing that triumphant song; *O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?* O but all these streams will be sweet and refreshing to a soul that is hotly pursued by the Law. So long as we see not the uglineſſe of our leprosie in the glasse of the Law, we have our own *Abana* and *Parphar*, that we think may do our turn: but when once our case is truly laid open to us, then will we be content to wash our selves in *Jordan* seven times.

III. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, that it

maketh a Christian live constantly under the impression of the sinfulnesse of sin. What is it that maketh sin exceeding sinfull to a Christian? Is it not this, He hath been fourty dayes in *Moses* School? And we conceive that the ground why such fools as we make a mock of sin, is, because we know not what it is to be under the power of his wrath and the apprehensions of the indignation of God.

But now to come to that which we intend to speak of: We told you, at the first occasion that we spake upon these words, that there were many excellent things concerning the grace of Faith, holden forth in them. The first thing (which was holden forth concerning this radicall grace of Faith) was the infinite advantage that redoundeth to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, and giving obedience to this command: which we cleared to be holden forth, not onely from the scope, but also from the nature of this command. And now to speak a little to the point, we shall propose these considerations, that may abundantly shew how advantagious a thing this excellent grace of Faith is.

I. The first Consideration, that speaketh it, is this, That Faith maketh Christ precious to a soul, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is precious.* And we would have you knowing this, that Faith maketh Christ more precious to a soul, nor sense, or any other thing can make him. And first, Faith maketh Christ more precious nor sense, because the esti-

ma tion

mation which the grace of Faith hath of Christ, it is builded upon the excellency of his Person: but the estimation of sense it is builded upon the excellency of his actings: so that, because he is such to them, therefore they love and esteem him. But that Heroick grace of Faith, it taketh up the excellency of Christs person, and that maketh him precious to them. Secondly, Faith makes Christ more precious then sense, because sense looketh to that love which Christ manifesteth in his Face, and in his Hands, and in his Feet: but Faith looketh to that love which is in his heart. Sense will cry forth, *Who is like to thee? whose countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the Cedar: whose hands are as gold rings, set with Beryl, and whose legs are like pillars of Marble set in sokets of Gold.* Sense will look to the smylings of Christ, and will wonder; it will look to his dispensations and actings, and will be constrained to cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* But the grace of Faith solaceth it self in the Fountain from whence all these springs and sweet inundations of love do flow. Thirdly, Faith maketh Christ more precious then Sense; because Faith looketh not only to what Christ is presently, but unto what Christ is from eternity before time, and what Christ shall be unto eternity after time; But sense onely doth look to what Christ is presently. And ye must conceive, that the sweet travelling of Faith betwixt infinite love from eternity before, and infinite love unto eternity after,

must make Faith to fall in a sea of wondering, and raiseth the thoughts to the highest pitch of desire and estimation. Fourthly, We may likewise adde, that the impression of the preciousnesse of Christ, which sense maketh upon the soul, it is not so constant, nor so single, as that which faith doth make. O but the grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look of Christ, and letteth him see Christ cloathed with ornaments of Glory, and divine Majesty. Sense followeth Christ rather that it might see his Miracles; and Love, that it may be fed with Loaves; but Faith follows Christ for himself above all.

II. The second consideration to speak the advantage of it, is, that the grace of Faith, it hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God; so that *whatsoever a Christian shall seek in Faith, hee shall receive it.* It is the noble gift that was once given to Faith, that it should never seek any thing and bee denyed, according to that word in *Matth.* 21. 22. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it*: And that word in Joh. 15. 7. *Abide in me*, that is, *believe*, and the *promise* is annexed to this, *whatsoever ye shall ask, yee shall receive*: And it is clear likewise from the preceeding verse to our Text, that if we obey this command of Faith, *Whatsoever we shall ask of God, we shal receive it.* And I would speak these two things to you from this. First, That oftentimes Christ putteth a blank in a Christians hand, who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Matth.* 20. 32. Is there not an ample

blank

blank put into that mans hand, *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up that blank with what he would; And secondly, There is this which is one of the greatest steps of Christs matchlesse condescendency, that oftentimes when his own have sought in their presumption a blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark* 10. 35, 36. The two disciples who present this desire to Christ, We desire, say they, *That whatsoever we ask, thou shalt give it unto us*, and presently that is answered, *What will ye that I should do for you?* Christ hath an infinite good will to satisfie the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh out Christs boundlesse good will, to satisfie the desires of all that belong to him; It may be cleared in that word, *Joh.* 16. 24. Where he chargeth his Disciples with this, *Hitherto* (saith he) *have ye asked me nothing*; ye must not suppose that *Peter*, *James* and *John* never sought a suit of Christ, but the meaning of that expression is this, ye sought nothing in comparison of that, which I was willing to give, and which your necessity did call for at my hands, which ye should have sought.

III. There is this third consideration to point out the advantage of Faith, It is that grace, that keepeth all the graces of the spirit in life and exercise; Faith is that higher wheel, at the motion of which, all the lower wheels do move; If so wee may speak, Faith is that *Primum mobile*, that first;

firſt moves and turns about all theſe lower graces of the Spirit, according to that, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Adde to your faith, vertue, and to your vertue, patience, and to your patience, brotherly kindneſſe.* Firſt, The grace of Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of Love, as is clear, *Eph.* 3 17. where theſe two Graces are conjoyned: As likewiſe from *Rom.* 5. 1. compared with *verſe* 5. *Being juſtified by faith.* Then this effect followeth upon it, *The love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts*: And ſo it is certain, that Faith keepeth Love in Life. Faith (being the Spy of the ſoul, and that Intelligencer, and precious Meſſenger) it goeth out, and bringeth in objects unto Love, Faith draweth aſide the vail, and love ſitteth down and ſolaceth it ſelf in the diſcoveries of Faith. Secondly, The grace of Faith likewiſe, it keepeth the grace of Mortification in exerciſe: as is clear not only from *Epheſ.* 6. 6. but from 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. *This is our victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith*; And it is certain, that Faith keepeth mortification in exerciſe, and advanceth holineſſe, not only becauſe of this, that Faith is that grace that preſenteth to a Chriſtian the abſolute purity and ſpotleſſe holineſſe of Jeſus Chriſt: but alſo becauſe it maketh them eſteem their idols taſtleſſe as the white of an egge, and they become unto them as their ſorrowfull meat. The beſt principle of mortification is this, the diſcoveries of the inviſible vertues of Jeſus Chriſt. That mortification which ariſeth from the lively diſcoveries of the excellency of Jeſus Chriſt, is moſt

moſt real and abiding, as theſe waters which riſeth from the higheſt ſprings are not onely conſtant, but likewiſe moſt deep and excellent. Thirdly, Faith likewiſe hath influence upon mortification, as it doth take hold of that infinit ſtrength that is in Chriſt, by which a Chriſtian is inabled to mortifie his corruptions. Fourthly, Faith likewiſe maketh application *of the bloud of ſprinkling*, by which wee are purified from dead works. Fifthly, Likewiſe the grace of Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of Humility, as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 27. *By what Law*, ſaith he, *is boaſting excluded? It is not by the Law of Works, but by the Law of Faith.* Sixthly, Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of joy, as is clear, *Rom.* 15. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace in believing*: So that ye ſee the proper fruit of Faith is, *joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* And certainly, did wee believe more, wee ſhould rejoyce more. Seventhly, and laſtly, Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of hope: for it is impoſſible for hope to bee in lively exerciſes, except Faith once bee exerciſed: which may bee a ſhame unto you; For how can wee hope to attain the thing that is promiſed, except our faith firſt cloſe with the promiſe? So there is this difference betwixt the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope: the grace of Faith cloſeth with the promiſes, but the grace of Hope, it cloſeth with the thing that is promiſed.

IV. There is this fourth Conſideration, that may ſpeak out the excellency of the grace of Faith; It is that grace, by which

a Chriſtian doth attain to moſt divine fellowſhip, and conſtant correſpondency with Heaven. Would yee have that queſtion reſolved and determined, What is the beſt way, *Not to ſtir up our beloved, nor awake him untill he pleaſe?* It is this, be much in the grace of Faith: this is clear from *Eph.* 3.17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith:* By the exercise of all other graces, Chriſt is but a ſojourner, *That turneth aſide to tarry but for a night*; but by the exercise of this grace, he cometh to take up houſe with us. I will tell you what faith is, It is a ladder that reacheth betwixt heaven and earth: by the ſteps of which, a Chriſtian doth daily go up to heaven, and converſe with the higher Houſe. Faith is that grace, (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) by which wee have acceſſe to the Throne of his grace. Faith uſhers in the Believer to the Throne: and without it hee cannot have acceſſe there, nor joy when he is there.

V. Here is this advantage that attendeth the exercise of Faith; A believing Chriſtian is a praying Chriſtian: according to that word in *Mark* 9. 24. where theſe two are conjoyned together, *Lord, I believe*: and then hee falleth to his prayer preſently after that confeſſion, *Help thou my unbelief.* And it is clear from *Pſal.* 63. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee, my ſoul thirſteth for thee.* And ſometimes Faith is a moſt impatient grace: but we may alwayes ſay of it, that it is a moſt diligent grace. Oh is it not the neglect of this precious exercise of faith and of the duty of ſecret Prayer, that makes

our leanneſſe teſtifie to our Face, and maketh our ſouls as a barren wilderneſſe? I am perſwaded of this, (that ſince Chriſt had any followers, and ſince ever this everlaſting Goſpel was preached in Paradiſe) the exerciſe of ſecret prayer was never ſo much neglected. Wee have turned over all our prayers into complements with God. We know not what it is *to riſe at mid-night and call upon God, and to inquire after our Maker under the ſilent watches of the night.* O but it is a ſweet diverſion from ſleep, to retire our ſelves (in the ſilent ſeaſons of the night) from all thoughts about worldly matters, and to converſe with that inviſible Majeſty.

VI. There is this ſixth conſideration to point out the advantage of Faith: That Faith is that grace that doth facilitate a Chriſtians obedience, and maketh it moſt pleaſant and eaſie; This is clear from *Heb.* 11. 8. *By faith Abraham, when commanded to go to a ſtrange land, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whether he went:* The word may be rendered, *He did chearfully obey.* And ver. 17. *By faith he offered up his only Son.* Would ye know the reaſon why his commands are your burden, and why his precepts are your croſſes? It is becauſe of this, *Yee do not believe*: And ſo it is moſt certain, that it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to attain to a pleaſant way of obedience, without the exerciſe of Faith. Faith holdeth up the Crown to a Chriſtian, and this crown maketh him to obey. Faith gathereth ſtrength from Chriſt, and that ſtrength maketh obedience very eaſie. Faith taketh up the excellency

cellency of Christ, and this maketh a Christian to look upon his duty, more as his dignity, then his duty. And we are perswaded of this, that our chariot wheel should move more swiftly, *(like the chariots of Aminadab)* if we were more in the exercise of the grace of Faith. Would ye know an answer to that question. What is the first most requisit for a Christian while here below? Faith; And what secondly is most requisit? Faith; And what thirdly is most requisit for a Christian? even Faith. Faith above all things, and above all things, Faith.

VII. There is another advantage of it, that by Faith our service and prayers are accepted of God. Would ye know what is the prayer of a Christian that is not in Faith? *It is a smoak in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day. The unbelievers sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord.* This is clear from *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith* Abel *offered up unto God a more acceptable sacrifice then* Cain; and we conceive that there are many unanswered prayers which we do put up, because we want that noble exercise of Faith.

VIII. And lastly, we shall likewise adde this, that Faith is the grace by which a Christian hath that perfect and immediate sight (as it were) of great things that are promised to him; Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of Heaven, and Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of God; according to the word, *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*, and that noble paradox, that is said of Faith, *Heb.* 11. 27. *By faith Moses*

ſaw him that is inviſible. Is it not an impoſſible thing, to ſee that, which cannot be ſeen? But the meaning of it is this, That Faiths diſcoveries of God, are as certain and ſure, as the diſcoveries of our bodily eyes are: Faith is an intelligent grace, yea, it is a moſt ſure and infallible grace; What will Faith not do? And what can yee do who want Faith?

Now to enforce the advantages and excellencies of Faith a little more, wee ſhall propoſe to you the diſadvantages of that wofull ſin of unbelief.

I. There is this diſadvantage of the ſin of unbelief, that all the actions that proceed from an unbeliever, they are impure and defiled, according to that in *Tit.* 1. 15. *But unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled. Their prayer is unclean:* yea, (as *Solomon* ſpeaketh) *their plowing is ſin:* yea their going about the moſt excellent duties (for matter) is an abomination to God, according to that word, *Rom.* 14. 23. *What ever is not of faith, is ſin.* So the want of Faith is the great polluter of all our actions and of all our performances.

II. There is this ſecond diſadvantage of miſbelief, that it is impoſſible for one in the exerciſe of unbelief, to mortifie a luſt or idol: and wee may allude unto theſe words in *Matth.* 17. 20. When his diſciples came to him and aſked this queſtion, *Why could wee not caſt out this devil?* That was given as an anſwer, *becauſe of your unbelief:*

Un-

Unbelief is that, which taketh up arms for our idols; and doth most strongly defend them: for there is nothing that will kill corruption so much, as the exercise of faith: and when that is laid aside, we have laid by our weapons, and have in a manner concluded a treaty of peace with our idols, that we shall not offend them, if they offend not us.

III. There is this disadvantage that waiteth upon the sin of unbelief, that such an one cannot win nor attain to the grace of *establishment, but is alwayes as the waves of the sea, tossed to and fro*, untill once hee win to the exercise of Faith, as is clear from *Isa.* 7. 9. *Except ye believe, ye shall not be established.*

IV. There is this disadvantage that waiteth on it; it is the mother of hardnesse and stupidity of heart, according to that word in *Mark* 16. 14. Where he upbraideth them because of their unbelief, and then that danger followeth, to wit, *hardnesse of heart*, this is clear also from *Act.* 19. 9. Where these two sister-devils are conjoyned and locked together, *unbelief and hardnesse of heart*, because it is unbelief indeed, that hindereth all the graces, by which the grace of tendernesse must be maintained.

V. There is this disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, that it is big with childe of apostacy from God, and of defection from him, according to that word, *Heb.* 3. 12. *Beware lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief* (and there the fruit of it) *to depart from the living God.* And certainly it is no wonder, that unbelief travel in birth, till that cursed

curſed childe of Apoſtacy be brought forth; not onely becauſe of this, that an unbeliever loſeth the thoughts of the excellency of Chriſt, but alſo becauſe he increaſeth in his thoughts of love towards his idols; for Chriſt doth decreaſe in thoſe who miſbelieve, and their idols do increaſe in their love, and in their deſires, and in their eſtimation.

VI. There is this ſixth diſadvantage in the ſin of unbelief, it hindereth the communication of many ſignall workings and tokens of the love and favour of the moſt High, according to that ſad word that is in *Mat.* 13.58. at the cloſe, *He could not do many mighty works there becauſe of their unbelief.* Unbelief, as it were, laid a reſtraint on Chriſt, that he could not effectuate theſe things which he was willing to perform. And (to ſhut up our diſcourſe at this time) I would only adde theſe two aggravations, which may ſomewhat enforce what we have ſpoken; (I ſay) there are theſe two aggravations in the ſin of unbelief, even in his own who have a right (and alſo his call) to believe: 1. That after Chriſt hath given moſt ſenſible diſcoveries of himſelf, *Wherein yee have ſeen him*, as it were, *face to face*, yet wee will not believe: this is clear from *Joh.* 6. 36. *Though ye have ſeen me*, ſaith Chriſt, *yet yee do not believe in me.* There is not a manifeſtation of Chriſts preſence, but it is a witneſſe againſt you, becauſe of your unbelief. Would ye hear the voice of ſenſe, that is rectified? It is this, believe on the Son of God. Secondly, That notwithſtanding of the ſignal demonſtrations of the power

of

of Christ, yet, though it were the mortifying of some lust and idol within them, yet they will not believe, but upon new temptations will doubt of his love to them. Christ preacheth faith by his Word, He preacheth faith by His sufferings, He preacheth faith by his dispensations, He preacheth faith by his promises, he preacheth faith by his rods, and if these five instruments will not ingage your hearts to believe, what can move them? Do not his two wounds in his precious hands, preach out this point of Faith, believe him: Doth not that hole opened in his side, preach this Doctrine, *That we should believe in him.* And these two wounds, that he received in his precious feet, do they not preach this, *That we should believe on a crucified Saviour*? And we would only say this, that sometime it is the case of his own, that after the convictions of this, that it is their duty to believe, and also after some desires to close with Christ, yet they find inability to close with him. Is it not certain that to will (*to believe*) is sometime present with you: but how to perform ye know not? And I would have a Christian making this fourfold use of such a dispensation as that, (which is most ordinarily) when convictions of our duty to believe, and some desires to close with Christ, is not followed with actual performances.

1. To study to have your convictions more deeply rooted within you; for it doth sometimes follow, that resolutions and mines to believe, are not blest with actual believing;

ing; becauſe the conviction of our duty to believe, is not deeply imprinted upon your conſcience.

2. Be convinced of that deſperate enimity (*and that myſtery of iniquity*) that is within you, that yee can have ſome will to do, without ability to perform. Wee confeſſe, it is not an ordinary diſeaſe in theſe days, to have ſuch a contrariety betwixt a Chriſtians will and his practice, our will for the moſt part being no better then our practice; But ſometime it is, which may make you cry forth, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death.*

3. That ye would be much in the imploying of Chriſt, that as hee hath given you to will, ſo alſo hee might make you to do. Chriſt is about to convince his own in ſuch a diſpenſation as that, *That faith is the gift of God*: Faith is ſo noble a grace, that it cannot be ſpinned out from our reſolutions, nor from our endeavours; Faith is ſuch a divine plant, *as the Fathers right hand muſt plant in our ſouls.*

4. Let it convince you of the excellency of the grace of Faith (for the difficulty of attaining to any thing may ſpeak out the excellency of that thing) there is no ſin but it may be eaſily win at; There is an eaſineſſe and facility to overtake the paths of our idols: but the graces of the Spirit are ſo excellent things, that wee muſt fight before we attain them. And you who are ſtrangers to Chriſt Jeſus (and have never known what it is to cloſe with him) wee would requeſt

you

you in Christs Name to be reconciled to him. What know ye, O men, (or rather Atheists) but this shall bee the last summonds that yee shall get to believe? And that because yee disobey this precious summonds, there shall be one presented to you that yee cannot fit. I remember of one man, who looking upon many thousands that were under his command, weeped over them, when he considered how that within a few years all these should be laid in their graves, and should be in eternity. O but it were much of our concernment, to bee trying our selves how it is with us. We are not afraid that it is a breach of charity, to wish that but one of each ten that are within these doors, were heirs of the grace of life, and had the solide and spiritual expectation of heaven. I think, if Christ were to come presently to speak to us; hee might not onely say to each twelve that are here, *One of you shall betray me:* but wee are afraid, that hee would say to each twelve that are here, *Eleven of you shall betray mee, and but one only shall passe free.* O doth it not concern you, to enquire where ye shall rest at night, when the long shadows of the everlasting evening shall be stretched out upon you? I think there are some, that are so settled upon their lies, that if they were one day in hell, and saw all the torments that are there, and were brought from it the next day to live on earth, they would not repent. And more, there are some, that take them up one day to see the joyes of heaven, and bring them back again, they would

not

not pursue after these blessed and everlasting enjoyments. O is not Christ much undervalued by us? But I must tell you this, *One wo is past, but behold another wo is fast coming.* O the screighing of these spirits that are entered into their everlasting prison-house, out of which there is no redemption. What shall be your choise, when Christ shall come in the clouds? I am perswaded, there are many, to whom, at that day, this Doctrine would be ravishing, *viz.* *That there were not a death, that there were not a God, and that there were not an eternity.* Oh! will yee believe, *That the sword of the Justice of God is bathed in heaven, and shall come down to make a sacrifice, not in the land of* Idumea, *nor in the land of* Bozra; *but hee is to make a sacrifice among his people, who seemed to make a Covenant with him by sacrifice.* Ah, ah, shall we say that? If that argument were used to many, that within fourty dayes they should bee at their long and everlasting home, they would yet spend thirty nine of these days in taking pleasure upon their lusts. I am perswaded of this, that there are many who think that the way betwixt heaven and earth is but one days journey; they think they can believe in one day, and triumph at night: But O! it shall be a short triumphing that such believers as these shall have. Therefore, O study to close with a crucified Saviour, rest on him by faith, delight your selves in him with love, and let your souls be longing for the day when your voice shall bee heard in heaven (and O how sweet shall it be sung) *Arise, arise, arise, my love,*

love, my dove, my fair one, and come away: for behold your winter is past, your everlasting summer is come, and the time of the singing of birds is near: When Christ shall come over these mountains of *Bether*, hee shall cry, *Behold I come*: and the soul shall sweetly answer, *Come Blessed Lord Jesus, Come.* O what a life shall it be! that with these two arms yee should eternally incircle Christ, and hold him in your arms, or rather be incircled by him? *Wait for him, for he shall come, and his reward is with him*, and he shall once take home the wearied travellers of hope.

SERMON IV.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

THere are two great and excellent gifts, which God in the depth of his boundlesse love hath bestowed on his own. First, There is that infinit gift and royal donation, his own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, which is called, *The gift of God*, *Joh.* 4 10. And secondly, There is that excellent gift of the grace of Faith, which God hath bestowed upon his own, which is also called, *The gift of God*, Ephes. 2. 8. *Faith is the gift of God.* And is it not certain, that these two gracious gifts ought to ingage our souls and hearts much unto him? Infinite Majesty could give no gift greater nor his Son,

Son, and infinite poverty could receive, no other gift so suitable as Christ; It was the most noble gift that heaven could give, and it is the greatest advantage for earth to receive it. And wee could wish that the most part of the study and practice of men (that is spent in pursuit after these low and transient vanities) might bee once taken up in that precious pursuit after Christ. We could wish that all the questions and debates of the time were turned over into that soul concerning question, *What shall we do to be saved?* And that all the questions, controversies, and contentions of the time were turned over into that divine contention and heavenly debate. *Who should be most for Christ, who should be most for exalting of the noble and excellent plant of renown*; and that all our judgings and searchings of other mens practices and estate might be turned over into that useful search, to *prove and examine our selves whether we be in the faith or not.* And I would ask you this question, what are your thoughts concerning precious Christ, seeing he is that noble object of Faith? We would only have you taking along these things, by which Christ may be much commended to your hearts: First, There was never any that with the eyes of Faith did behold the matchlesse beauty and transcendent worth of that crucified Saviour, that returned his enemy. There is soul conquering vertue in the face of Christ, and there is a heart captivating and overcoming power in the beauty of Jesus Christ. This first sight that ever persecuting *Saul* got

of Christ, it brought him unto an endless
captivity of love. Secondly, There is this
that we would say of precious Christ, which
may engage our souls unto Him, that for all
the wrongs Believers do to Christ, yet hath
He never an evil word of them to His Father,
but commends them: which is clear from
that of *Joh.* 17. 6. where Christ doth com-
mend the Disciples to the Father for the
grace of obedience, *They have keeped thy
Word*: and for the grace of Faith, *verse 8.
They have believed that thou didst send me*,
and yet were not the Disciples most defective
in obedience, both in this, *That they did not
take up their crosse and follow Christ*: and also
in that, they did not adhere to Him in the
day that He was brought to *Cajaphas* hall,
and were they not most defective in the grace
of Faith? as is clear from *Matth.* 17. 17. and
likewise from *Joh.* 14. 1. He is pressing them
to believe in Him, and yet He doth commend
them to the Father, as most perfect in these
things. Thirdly, There is this that we
would lastly say of Him who is the noble object
of Faith, look to the eminent depths of
Christs condescendency, and then ye will be
provoked to love Him. Was it not infinite
love that made Christ to ly three dayes in the
grave, that we might be through all the ages
of Eternity with Him? Was it not infinite
condescendency that made His precious head
wear a crown of thorns, that we might
eternally wear a crown of Glory? Was it
not infinite condescendency that made Christ
wear a purple robe, that so we might wear

hat precious robe of the righteousneſſe of
e Saints? And was it not matchleſſe con-
eſcendency, that Chriſt, who knew no ſin,
was made ſin for us, and like unto us, that
o we might become like unto him, and be
nade the righteouſneſſe of God in Him.

But to come to that which we intend main-
y to ſpeak upon at this time, which is that
econd thing that we propoſed to ſpeak of
rom theſe words: and that is concerning
he excellency of this grace of Faith, which
ve cleared was holden out in that, that faith
was called his commandment, which is ſo
alled by way of eminency and excellency.
There are many things in Scripture, which
nay ſweetly point out the precious excel-
ncy of this grace of Faith, and we ſhall only
peak to theſe things.

I. The firſt thing that ſpeaketh out the
xcellency of Faith is this, it exerciſeth it
lf upon a moſt noble Object (to wit) Jeſus
hriſt: Faith and love being the two arms
f the immortall ſoul, by which we do im-
race a crucified Saviour, which is often
ointed at in Scripture: and we ſhall point
t theſe three principall acts of Faith, which
exerciſeth on Jeſus Chriſt as the Object
fit.

1. The firſt is, to make up an Union be-
wixt Chriſt and the Believer (Faith being
deed an uniting grace, and that which
itteth the members to the head) and to
ake this more fully appear, we would point
ut a little what ſweet harmony and cor-
ſpondency there is betwixt theſe two ſi-

ster graces, (to wit) faith and love. Faith
that nail, which fasteneth the soul to Chri
and love is that grace which driveth that n
to the head; Faith at first taketh but a te
der grip of Christ, and then love cometh
and maketh the soul take a more sure grip
him. Secondly, Ye may see that harmo
in this; Faith is that grace which take
hold (as it were) *of the garments of Chri
and of his words*: but love (that ambitio
grace) it taketh hold of the heart of Chri
and, as it were, his heart doth melt in t
hand of love. Thirdly, It may be seen
this; Faith is that grace, which draweth
first draught of the likeness and image
Christ upon a soul, but that (accomplishi
grace of love, it doth compleat these fi
draughts and these imperfect lineaments
Christs Image, which were first drawn on t
soul. Fourthly, By faith and love the he
of Christ and of the Believer are so unite
that they are no more two, but one Spirit.

2. There is this second act that Faith e
erciseth on Christ, and it is in discovering
matchlesse excellencies, and the transce
dent properties of Jesus Christ, O wh
large and precious commentaries doth fai
make upon Christ? It is indeed that faith
spy, which doth alwayes bring up a go
report of him. Hence it is, that faith is c
led *understanding*, Colos. 2. 2. Because it
that grace, which revealeth much of the p
cious truth of that noble Object.

3. And there is this third noble act
Faith, exercising it self upon Christ,

maketh Christ precious to the soul, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you which believe, hee is precious.* And if there were no other thing to speak forth its worth, but this, it is more then sufficient: for no doubt this is the exercise of the higher House, to be dwelling on the contemplation of Christs beauty, and to have their souls transported with love towards him; and with joy in him. Reason and amazement are seldome companions, but here they do sweetly joyn together; First, a Christian loveth Christ, because of Christs actings, and then hee loveth all these actings because they come from Christ.

II. Now secondly, this pointeth out the precious excellency of the grace of Faith, it is that grace which is most mysterious and sublime in its actings, it hath a more divine and sublime way of acting then any other grace; Hence it called, *The mystery of faith.* which speaketh this, that the actings of faith are mysteries to the most part of the world, and I shall only point at these things which may speak out the mysterious actings of the grace of Faith.

1. Faith can believe, and fix it self on a word of promise, although sense, reason and probability, seem to contradict the accomplishment of that promise: Faith it walketh not by the low dictates of sense and reason; but by a higher rule, (to wit) *The sure word of prophecie*, which is clear from *Rom.* 4. 19. *where Abraham believed the promise*, notwithstanding that sense & reason seemed to contra-

tradict it: *Hee conſidered not the deadneſſe of his own body, neither the barrenneſſe of Sarahs womb, but was ſtrong in the faith, giving glory to God*: As it is clear from *Heb.* 11. 29, 34. Where Faith believed *their paſſing through the red ſea, as through dry ground*, which was moſt contrary to ſenſe and reaſon: *Faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of rams horns.* Which things are moſt impoſſible to ſenſe and reaſon; for ſenſe will oftentimes cry out, *All men are liars*; And reaſon will ſay, *How can ſuch a thing be?* And yet that Heroick grace of Faith cryeth out, *Hath he ſpoken it: He will alſo do it, Hath he ſaid it? Then it ſhall come to paſſe.*

2. Faith can believe a word of promiſe, notwithſtanding that the diſpenſations of God ſeem to contradict it; as was clear in *Job*, who profeſſed, *Hee would truſt in God, though he ſhould kill him.* And no doubt, but this was the practice of believing *Jacob*, hee truſted that that promiſe ſhould bee accompliſhed, *That the elder ſhould ſerve the younger*; though all the diſpenſations of God, (which he did meet with) ſeemed to ſay, that promiſe ſhould not be accompliſhed.

3. Faith can believe a word of promiſe, even when the Commands of God ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment of that promiſe: This is clear in that ſingular inſtance of *Abrahams* faith, that notwithſtanding hee was commanded to kill his promiſed ſeed, (upon whom he did depend the accompliſhment of the promiſes) yet hee believed that

he promiſes ſhould bee performed. And hough there were indeed extraordinary and range trials of his faith, as he had natural ffections to wreſtle with; yet over the bel- y of all theſe, believing *Abraham*, he giveth aith to the promiſe, and bringeth his *Iſaac* o the Altar (though hee did receive him ack again) this is clear from *Heb.* 11. 17, 8, 19.

4. Faith can exerciſe it ſelf upon the pro- miſe, notwithſtanding that challenges and convictions of worthineſſe and guilt do wait on the Chriſtian; This is clear, 2*Sam.* 23. 5. That although *his houſe was not ſo with God as did become*, yet he believed the promiſe: As likewiſe it is clear from *Pſal.* 65. 3. *Iniqui- ties prevail againſt mee*: and yet that doth not interupt his Faith, but he ſaith, *As for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge them away.* And certainly, it were a noble and precious act of Faith to believe, notwithſtanding of un- anſwerable challenges of guilt; the beſt way both to crucifie our Idols, and to anſwer theſe challenges, is believing *And hoping a- gainſt hope*, and cloſing with Chriſt: This is moſt clear from *Iſa.* 64. 6,7. compared with *verſ.* 8. where after ſtrange challenges, the prophet hath a ſtrange word, *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father.* There is an Emphaſis in the word (now) for all this, *Yet thou art* (now) *our Father.*

5. And laſtly, this pointeth out the my- ſterious acting of the grace of Faith, that it exerciſeth it ſelf upon an inviſible object, even upon Chriſt not yet ſeen, according to

that word, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Whom having not seen, yet ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing*, &c. I pose the greater part of you who are here, whether or not these bee two of the greatest Paradoxes and mysteries unto you? For, is not this a mystery, to love him whom wee never saw? *Whom having not seen, yet ye love*: To love an absent and unseen Christ, is a mystery to the most part of the world: and is not this a mystery, to believe on him whom we never saw? *In whom, though ye see him not, yet believing.* And I shall adde this, that Faith can hold fast its interest with God, notwithstanding the most precious Christian should call us hypocrites, and not acknowledge us, this is clear in the practice of *Job*; And most clear from that word, *Isa.* 63. 16. *Doubtlesse thou art our Father, though* Abraham *bee ignorant of us, and* Israel *acknowledge us not.*

III. Thirdly, this pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, that Faith, (when it is in exercise) is that grace by which a Christian doth attain unto most sensible enjoyments. There is a great question that is much debated among Christians, what is the way to win this happy length, to bee alwayes under the sweet and refreshing influence of heaven, and to have his dew alwayes coming down upon our branches? I can give no answer to it, but this, be much in the exercise of Faith: This is clear from that notion and name put upon Faith, *Isa.* 45. 22. It is called a look to Christ, which is a most sensible act. If yee would know a

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deſcription of Faith, It is this, *The divine contemplation of the immortal ſoul, upon that divine, excellent, and precious object, Jeſus Chriſt.* For God never made Faith a liar, and therefore its eye is never off him that is the noble object of Faith, Jeſus Chriſt manifeſted in the Goſpel: as it is clear, *Epheſ.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe*, which preacheth out the excellent enjoyments theſe had after their cloſing with Chriſt who is inviſible. Our Faith is called a ſeeing, which ſpeaketh out this, that Faiths ſight of God, is as certain as if we did behold him with our eyes, as is clear; *Heb.* 11. 27. *Moſes ſaw him by Faith who is inviſible.* And we conceive that the ground which maketh the moſt part of us have ſuch complaints, *How long wilt thou forget us for ever?* It is this; the want of the Spiritual exerciſe of Faith: and are there not ſome here who may cry out, *It is more then thirty dayes ſince I did behold the King*; Yea, there are ſome who may go a greater length, and cry out, *I have lived theſe two years at Jeruſalem, and yet I have not ſeen the Kings face?* Yea, there are ſome here whoſe complaint may go a little higher, and cry forth, *Theſe three years and ſix moneths it hath not rained on me*, but the clouds have been reſtrained and bound up, and the heavens have become braſſe. And would you know the riſe of theſe complaints, it is this, ye are not much in the Spiritual exerciſe of Faith. And to you, I would only ſay theſe two words, Firſt, It is

easier to perswade a reprobate that he is defective in the fear of God, and in his love to God, then to perswade some such, that they are wanting to God in their Faith; for they hold fast that peece of desperate iniquity till they die. Secondly, We would say to these of you who have the valley of *Achor* for a door of hope, and have tasted of the sweetnesse of Christ, some of you will be lesse convinced, for the neglect of the duty of Faith, then for neglect of the duty of Prayer, or of the duty of keeping the Sabbath day. But I am perswaded of this, that if the noble worth of that transcendant object were known, we would have a holy impatience, untill once we did believe.

IV. Fourthly, This also pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, It is that grace by which a Christian is advanced to the highest and most inconceivable pitch of dignity, and that is, To be the child of the living God: As is clear, *Joh.* 1. 12. *To as many as received (or believed in him) he gave power or prerogative to become the sons of God.* And certainly that noble prerogative of Adoption is much undervalued by many: And I will tell you two grounds whereon the most part of men undervalue that excellent gift of Adoption: First, They do not take up the infinit highnesse of God (and what a one He is) otherwise they would cry out with David, *Seemeth it a small thing in your eyes to bee a son to the King of Kings?* Secondly, We do not take up, nor understand these matchlesse Priviledges which are given to them

them who are once in this estate, I am perswaded, if this were believed, that *he who is a servant doth not abide in the house for ever*, (though he that is a Son doth) it would stir us up to more divine zeal in our persuit after faith.

V. Fifthly, This likewise pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, It is that grace, by which all other actions are pleasant to God, and are taken off our hand, as is clear, *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice then Cain*, which must be understood even of all other duties. And that word, *vers.* 6. *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, speaketh this also, That by faith we do exceedingly please him. And this is a most sad and lamentable reproof unto many who are here, that their actions do not please God, because they are not in Faith. Would ye know a description of your prayers? (ye who are hypocrites, and destitute of the knowledge of God) It is this, Your prayers are the breach of the third Command, *In taking the name of the Lord in vain; for which he will not hold you guiltless.* And would ye know what is your hearing of Sermon? *It is an abomination to the Lord*, according to that word in *Tit.* 1. 15. *To the unbelieving and impure, nothing is clean.* And as *Solomon* doth speak, *The plowing of the wicked is sin.* So that all your actions that ye go about, are but an offence to the Majesty of the Lord.

Now we would speak to these two things before we proceed to the evidences of faith:

(to wit) First, That there is a difference betwixt the direct act of Faith, and the reflecting act of Faith. For there may be a direct act of faith in a Christian, when he is not perswaded that he doth believe; but the reflecting acts of faith are these which a Christian hath, when he is perswaded in his conscience that he doth believe. And we would secondly say, that there are many that go down to there grave under that soul destroying delusion, that they are in faith, and yet never did know what faith is: I am perswaded, there are many whom all the preachings in the world will never perswade, that they did never believe, their faith being born with them, and it will die with them, without any fruit. But faith being such an excellent grace, and so advantagious, (whereof we have spoken a few things) we shall speak a little further of it, First, in pointing out some evidences, by which a Christian may know, whether or not he be indeed in the Faith. Secondly, I shall give you some helps whereby Faith may be keeped in exercise.

I. Now there is this first evidence of faith, that a Christian who doth believe, he accounteth absence, and want of fellowship with Christ, and communion with him, one of the greatest and most lamentable crosses that ever he had: as is clear, *Psalm* 13. 3. *Lighten mine eyes*, saith *David*, that is, *Let me behold, and be satisfied with thy face*; and the motive that he backeth it with, is this, *Lest I sleep the sleep of death*. *David* thought him-

himself a dead man, if Christ did withdraw his presence from him. Also it is clear, *Cant.* 3. 1. (compared with the following verses) where absence from Christ, and want of communion with him, was the greatest crosse the Spouse had: and it is clear from *Joh.* 20. 11, 12, 13. where *Mary* had a holy disdain of all things in respect and comparison of Christ. But I will tell you what a hypocrite doth most lament, and that is, the want of reputation among the Saints: that is the great god, and idol among hypocrites, and that which (when not enjoyed) hypocrites and atheists lament most, the world, and the lust of their eyes: when they want these, then they cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think heaven can never make up the losse of earth. And certainly, if many of us would examine our selves by this, we would finde our selves most defective. I would pose all yon who are here, who have taken on a name to be followers of Christ, whether or not ye have been content to walk thirty dayes in absence from Christ, and yet never to lament it? Hath not Christ been thirty dayes and more in heaven, without a visit from you? And yet for all this, ye have not cloathed your selves with sackcloath. I will not say, that this is an undeniable evidence of the totall want of the grace of Faith; but it doth eminently prove this, that the person who hath come this length, hath loſed much of his primitive love, and much of that high esteem which he ought to have of matchlesse Christ:

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what can you find in this world, that maketh you converse so little with heaven? I think that it is the noble encouragement of a Christian, when hee is going down to his grave, that he hath this wherewith to comfort himself, *I am to change my place, but not my company*: death to the believing Christian being a blessed transition and transportation to a more immediate, constant and uninterrupted enjoyment of God. But I believe, that if all who have the name of Believers in this generation, should go to heaven, they might have this to say, I am now not only to change my place, but also my company; For these seventy years I have been conversant with my idols, but now I am to converse with more blessed, divine, and excellent company. O that yee might be perswaded to pursue much after an absent Christ. Were it not a sweet period of our life, to breath out our last breath in his armes, and to be living in the faith of being eternally with him, which might be founded upon his Word.

II. There is this second evidence of one that is in the Faith: They do endeavour to advance that necessary work of the mortification of their idols, according to that word, 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*, *Act.* 15. 9. *Faith it purifieth the heart.* And concerning this evidence (lest any should mistake it) I would say these things to you. First, The mortification of a Christian, as long as he is here below, it doth more consist

sist in resolutions then attainments. It is certain, that there are high attainments of a Christian, in the mortification of his idols, but his resolutions go far above his performances. Secondly, Wee would say this, That those Christians who never came this length in Christianity, to make that an universal conclusion, and full resolution, *What have I to do any more with idols?* They may suspect themselves, that they are not in the Faith: for a Christian that is in Christ, he is universal in resolutions, though he be not so in practice, but defective in performances. A Christian may have big resolutions with weak performances; for resolution will be at the gate of heaven, before practice come from the borders of hell; there being a long distance betwixt resolution and practice; and the one much swifter then the other. And thirdly, Wee would likewise say, That yee who never did know what it was to endeavour (by prayer and the exercise of other duties) the mortification of your lusts and idols; yee may bee afraid, that ye have not yet the hope of seeing him as he is. And I would say this to many, who are settled upon their lies, and who never did know what it was to spend one hour in secret prayer for mortifying an idol, that they would beware lest that curse bee past in heaven against them; *I would have purged you, and yee would not be purged, therefore yee shall not bee purged any more till you die*; that iniquity of refusing to commune with Christ in the work of secret mortification, I say,

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that *iniquity shall not be purged away.* And we would once seriously desire you, by that dreadful sentence that Christ shall passe against you, and by the love ye have to your immorral souls, and by the pains of these everlasting torments of hell, that ye would seriously set about the work of spirituall mortification; that so ye may evidence that ye have believed, and that ye have the soul-comforting hope of eternal life. I would onely speak this one word to you, (and desire you seriously to ponder it,) What if within twelve hours hereafter a summonds were given to you (without continuation of dayes) to compear before the solemn and dreadfull Tribunal of that impartial Judge, Jesus Christ: What suppose ye, would be your thoughts? Will ye examine your own conscience, what ye think would be your thoughts, if such summonds were given unto you. I am perswaded of this, *That your knees would smite one against another, and your face should gather paleneſſe*, seeing your conscience would condemn you, *That ye had been weighed in the ballance and found light*: O think ye that ye can both fight and triumph in one day? Think ye that ye can fight and overcome in one day? Think ye your lusts and unmortified corruptions so weak and faint hearted an enemy, that upon the first appearance of such imaginary champions (as most part of us are in our own eyes) that your idols would lay down arms and let you trample on them? Believe me, mortification is not a work of one day, or one year, but

but it is a work will ſerve you all your time, begin as ſoon as ye will: And therefore ſeeing you have ſpent your dayes in the works of the fleſh, it is time that now yee would begin and purſue after him, whoſe works is with him, and whoſe reward ſhall come before him.

III. Now there is this third evidence, by which a Chriſtian may know whether he bee in the Faith or not, and it is, that Chriſt is matchleſſe and incomparable unto ſuch an one, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe Chriſt is precious*, and that word that *Luke* hath in his 7. Chap. at the cloſe, *That ſhee to whom much was forgiven, loved much.* Now leſt this likewiſe ſhould prove a diſcouragement to any, I would only have you taking notice of this, that a Chriſtian may bee a Believer, and yet want the ſenſible diſcoveries of this, that Chriſt is matchleſſy precious to him: but this is certain, that they which are in the lively exerciſe of Faith, it is impoſſible then for them not to eſteem Chriſt matchleſſe, and I would ſpeak this likewiſe to many who are here; Have yee not been living theſe ten years in Faith, and I would poſe you with this, Eſteem yee not your idols more matchleſſe then Chriſt, and more of worth then hee? It is impoſſible that there can bee any lively exerciſe of Faith, and not eſteem CHRIST matchleſſe, It is not to ſay it with your mouth, and contradict it with your heart will do the buſineſſe: For if your hearts could ſpeak, it would ſay, I would ſell Chriſt

Christ *for thirty pieces of silver*: But my idols would I sell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the world and its pleasures, better nor the eternity of joy? Oh, know yee not that word (O yee desperately ignorant of the Truths of God,) *That he who loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him:* And yet notwithstanding of the light of the word, yee would sell your immortal souls (with *Esau*) *For a messe of pottage*: O but it is a poor bargain when yee have sold the eternity of joy for a passing world, and for its transitory delights! I would earnestly know what shall be your thoughts in that day, when ye shall be standing upon the utmost line betwixt time and eternity. O what will bee your thoughts at that day? but you are to follow on to an endlesse pain, (by appearance) and then yee are to leave your idols. I shall only desire, that ye may read the word, *Isa.* 10. 3. *What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?* Ye shall then preach mortification to the life, though all the time of mortification shall be then cut off. O but to hear a worldly minded man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the face, (preach out concerning the vanity of this world) might it not perswade you that the world is a fancy and a dream that shall flee away, and shall leave you in the day of your greatest strait.

IV. And there is the fourth evidence of Faith, That a Christian, who doth truely be-

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lieve, hee is that Christian who intertaineth a divine jealousie and a holy suspition of himself, whether or not he doth believe; I love not that faith which is void of fear, this was clear in the practice of believing *Noah*, that though by faith he built the Ark, yet hee had fear mixed with his Faith. I know that there are some who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace; and more, it is not every one that doubteth, that certainly shal get heaven; for I think an hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal salvation; however I think the exercise of a hypocrite under his doubtings, it is more the exercise of his judgement, then the exercise of his conscience: And I may say, That if all the exercise of the Law which is preached in these dayes were narrowly searched, it would bee more the exercise of light, then the exercise of conscience, We speak these things as our doubt, which never was our exercise; and we make these things our publick exercise which was never our private and chamber exercise. And I think that if all that a Christian did speak to God in prayer, were his exercise, he would speak lesse, and wonder more. We would be speechlesse when wee go to God; for often if we did speak nothing but our exercise, we would have nothing to say. And certainly it is true, that often wee fall into that wofull sin, *of desperate lying against the holy Ghost*, by flattering God with our mouth, and lying unto him with our tongue. And I shall only say these

two

two words; There are some who have this for their great designe, *viz.* they would bee at peace with their conscience, and also they would bee at peace with their idols, they would gladly reconcile conscience and their idols together, that is their great designe. And there are some whose designe is a little more refined, they study rather to be reconciled with their conscience, then to be reconciled with God; Their great aim they shoot at, is this, to get their conscience quieted, though they know not what it is, to have the soul comforting peace of God to quiet them.

V. Now, There is this last evidence of Faith, That justifying Faith is a Faith which putteth the Christian to bee much in the exercise of these duties, by which it may bee maintained, for wee must keep Faith as *the apple of our eye:* And for that end, I would only give you these three things, by which Faith must be keeped in exercise; and a real Christian will bee endeavouring in some measure to attain unto these.

I. It keepeth Faith much in exercise, to bee much in marking and taking notice of the divine exercise and proofs of the love of God, wherewith a Christian doth meet, as is clear from that word in *Rom.* 5. 4. *Experience worketh hope.* I durst be bold to charge the most part that are indeed in Christ with this, that they are too little in remarking and taking notice of the experiences of his love. Yee should mark the place of your experience, and much more yee should mark the

the experience it self: as is clear from Scripture, that the very place where Christians did meet with experience, in such ane enjoyment of God, they marked it, *Ezek.* 1. 1. *By the rivers of Chebar the heavens were opened, and I saw the visions of God:* And *Gen.* 32. 30. *Jacob called the place Peniel*, the place of living, after seeing of the face of God: it was so remarkable unto him. And we conceive, that ye would mark these two things mainly in your practice. First, Ye would mark (if ye can possibly) the first day of your closing with Christ, and of your coming out of *Egypt*: and we may allude unto that command (if not more then allude unto it) in. *Dent.* 16. 1. *Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passeover unto the Lord thy God: For in the moneth of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* And secondly, We would have you much in marking these experiences which have increased your Faith, and which have strengthned your love, and which have made you mortifie your idols. These are experiences especially to be marked.

2. Faith is keeped in exercise, and we win to the lively assurance of our interest in God: which we would presse upon you, by being much in the exercise of secret prayer. O but many loveth much to pray when abroad, who never loved to pray when alone. And that is a desperate sign of hypocrisie, according to that, *Matth.* 6. 5. It is said of hypocrites, *They love to pray, standing in the Synagogues, and in the corner of the streets,*

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that they might be ſeen of men: But it is never ſaid of theſe perſons, that they love to pray alone, onely they loved to pray in Synagogues: but it is ſecret, and retired prayer, by which Faith muſt be keeped in exerciſe.

3. And there is this likewiſe that we would preſſe upon you, that ye would be much in ſtudying communion and fellowſhip with God, that ſo your Faith may be keeped in life. And O what a bleſſed life were it, each day to be taken up to the top of the mount *Piſga*, and there to behold that promiſed land, to get a refreſhfull ſight of the Crown every morning, which might make us walk with joy all alongs that day! The heart of a Chriſtian ought to be in heaven, his converſation ought to be there, his eyes ought to be there: And I know not what of a Chriſtian ought to be out of heaven (even before his going there) ſave his lumpiſh tabernacle of clay, which cannot inherite incorruption till he be made incorruptible. And I ſhall ſay no more but this, many of us are readier to betray him with a kiſſe, and crucifie him afreſh, then to keep communion with him: but *woe eternally be to him by whom the Son of man is betrayed: and that doth crucifie Chriſt afreſh: it were better that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the depth of the ſea.* I remember an expreſſion of a man, not two dayes ago, who (upon his death bed) being aſked by one what he was doing: did moſt ſtupidly, though moſt truly reply, *That he was fighting with Chriſt*

and I think that the moſt part of us (if he prevent us not) ſhall die *fighting with Chriſt.* But know, and be perſwaded, that he is too ſore a party for us *to fight with: He will once tread you in the wine preſſe of his fury, and he ſhall return with dyed garments from treading ſuch of you as would not imbrace him: He ſhall deſtroy you with all his heart. Therefore be inſtructed*, leſt his ſoul be disjoynted from you (as that word in *Jer.* 6. 8.) *And leſt your ſoul eternally be ſeparted from him:* Be inſtructed, I ſay, to cloſe with him by faith. Now to him who can make you to do ſo, we deſire to give praiſe.

In the two Sermons next following, you have the reſt of theſe ſweet Purpoſes, which the worthy Author Preached upon the ſame Text; Never before Printed.

SERMON V.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

THere are two great rocks, upon which a Christian doth ordinarily dash in his way and motion toward his rest. 1. The rock of presumption and carnal confidence; so that when Christ dandleth them upon his knees, and satisfieth them with the breasts of his consolations, and maketh their cup to overflow, then they cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved*. And, 2. The rock of misbelief and discouragement; So that, when he hideth his face and turneth back the face of his Throne, then they cry out, *Our hope and our strength is perished from the Lord*: we know not what it is to bear our enjoyments by humility, nor our crosses by patience and submission. O but misbelief and jealousie are bad interpreters of dark dispensations: they know not what it is to read these mysterious characters of divine Providence, except they be written in the legible characters of sense; misbelief is big with childe of twins, and is travelling till it bring forth apostacy and security; and no doubt, he is a blessed Christian that hath overcome that woful idol of misbelief, and doth walk by that Royal Law of the Word and not by that changeable rule of dispensations. We conceive that there are three great Idols and Dagons of a Christian, that hinder

him from putting a blank in Christs hand concerning his guiding to heaven, there is pride, self-indulgence, and security. Do we not covet to be more excellent then our neighbour? Do we not love to travell to heaven through a valley of Roses? And doe we not ambitiously desire to walk toward Sion, sleeping (rather then weeping) *as we go?* Are there not some words that we would have taken out of the Bible? That is sad divinity to flesh and bloud, *Through many tribulations must we enter into the Kingdome of Heaven*: we love not to be *changed from vessel to vessel, that so our scent may be taken from us.*

There are three great enemies of Christ: Misbelief, Hypocrisie, and Profanity. Misbelief is a bloudy sin, hypocrisie is a silent sin, profanity is a crying sin. Those are mother evils, and I shall give you these differences betwixt them: Misbelief crucifieth Christ under the vail of humility, hypocrisie crucifieth Christ under the vail of love, and profanity putteth him to open shame. Misbelief denyeth the love and power of God, hypocrisie denieth the omniscience of God, and profanity denyeth the justice of God. Misbelief is a sin that looketh after inherent righteousnesse, hypocrisie is a sin that looketh after external holinesse onely, and profanity is a sin that looketh after heaven without holinesse: making connexion betweene these things that God hath alwayes separate, and separating these things which he hath alwayes put together; So that their

faith shall once prove a delusion, and flie away as a dream in the night. But let us study this excellent grace of true and saving Faith, which shall be a precious remedy against all those Christ-destroying and soul-destroying evils.

But now to come to that which we did propose thirdly to be spoken of from the words, which was the sweetnesse of this grace of Faith; no doubt, it is a pleasant command, and it maketh all commands pleasant, it is that which casteth a divine lustre upon the most hard sayings of Christ, and maketh the Christian to cry forth, *God hath spoken in his holinesse, I will rejoyce.* Wee need not stand long to clear that Faith is a sweet and refreshing command; for it is oftentimes recorded in Scripture to the advantage of this grace, and unspeakable joy and heavenly delight are the hand-maids that wait upon it. But more particularly to make it out, we shall speak to these things. The first is, That this grace giveth a Christian a broad and comprehensive sight of Christ, and maketh him to behold not only the beauty of his actings, but the beauty of his person: and there are these three precious sights that Faith giveth to a Christian of Christ. First, It letteth the Christian see Christ in his absolute and personal excellency, taking him up as the eternal Son of God, as the Ancient of Dayes, as the Father of Eternity, as *the expresse Image of his Fathers person, and the brightnesse of his glory* and this filleth the soul with divine fear and admiration. Hence is that word, *Heb.* 11. 27.

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That we see by Faith him that is invisible. As if he had said, Faith is that grace that maketh things that are invisible, visible unto us. Secondly, It letteth the soul see Christ in his relative excellencies, that is, what he is to us; Faith taketh up Christ as a Husband, and from thence we are provoked to much boldnesse and divine confidence, and withall, to see these rich possessions that are provided for us by our elder Brother, who was *born for adversity*: Faith taketh up Christ as a blessed *Days man that did lay his hand upon us both*: And from thence it is constrained to wonder at the condescendency of Christ, it taketh him up as dying, and as redeeming us from the power of the grave, and from the hands of our enemies; and this provoketh Christians to make a totall and absolute resignation of themselves over unto Christ, *To serve him all the dayes of our life in righteousnesse and holinesse.* And, thirdly, Faith maketh the soul behold these mysterious draughts of spotlesse love, those divine emanations of love that have flowed from his ancient and everlasting love since the world began. Would you know the great ground why we are so ignorant of him, who is the study of Angels, and of all that are about the Throne, it is this, we are not much in the exercise of faith. And if we would ask that question, What is the way to attain to the saving knowledge of God in Christ? We could give no answer to it but this, Believe, and again believe, and again believe: Faith openeth these mysterious seals of his boundlesse perfection, and in

ſome way teacheth the Chriſtian to anſwer that unanſwerable queſtion, *What is His Name, and what is his Sons Name.*

There is this ſecondly that pointeth out the ſweetneſſe of Faith, that it giveth an excellent reliſh unto the promiſes, and maketh them food to our ſoul. What are all the promiſes without faith (as to our uſe) but as a dead letter that hath no life: But faith exerciſed upon the promiſes, maketh a Chriſtian cry out, *The words of his mouth are ſweeter unto mee then the honey and the honey comb*: as is clear from *Heb.* 11. 12, 13. It is by Faith that wee imbrace the promiſes, and do receive them.

Thirdly, The ſweetneſſe of Faith may appear by this, that it enableth a Chriſtian to rejoyce under the moſt anxious and afflicting diſpenſations that hee meeteth with while hee is here below; as is clear from *Rom.* 5. 1, 5. where his being juſtified by Faith hath this fruit attending it, to *joy in tribulation*; And likewiſe from *Heb.* 10, 34, 35. Doth not Faith hold the crown in its right hand, and letteth a Chriſtian behold theſe infinit dignities that are provided unto them, after they have, *as a ſtrong man, run their race*; And when a Chriſtian is put into a *furnace*, *hot ſeven times more then ordinary*, it bringeth down the Son of man Jeſus Chriſt, to *walk with them in the furnace*: So that they walk ſafely, and with joy through fire and water, and (in a manner) they can have no croſſe in his company. For would yee know what is the deſcripti-

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on of a crosse? It is to want Christ in any estate, And would ye know what is the description of prosperity? It is to have Christ in any condition or estate of life; What can ye want that have him, and what can he have that want him? He is that All; so that all things besides him are but vanity. But beside this, Faith doth discover unto a Christian, that there is a sweet period of all his trials and afflictions that he can be exposed unto: so that he can never say that of faith which *Ahab* spake of *Micajah*, *He never prophesieth good things to me*; But rather he may say alwayes the contrary, Faith never prophesieth evil unto me, it being a grace that prophesseth excellent things in the darkest night, and sweetly declareth, that though *weeping do endure for the evening, yet joy cometh in the morning*; And that, *though now they go forth weeping bearing precious seed, yet at last they shall return rejoycing, having sheaves in their bosome.*

And this may bring in the fourth consideration to point out the sweetnesse of Faith; That it giveth a Christian a refreshing sight of that land that is a far off, and maketh him to behold that inheritance that is provided for the *Saints in light*: it goeth forth to the *brook Eshcol*, and there doth pluck down those grapes that grow in Emanuels land, to bring up a good report upon that noble Countrey we are sojourning towards, and the City the streets whereof are paved with transparent gold. And howbeit it may be a perplexing debate be-

tween many and their own souls, whether or not these eyes that have been the windows through which so much uncleanneſſe hath entered, and these ſpecies of luſt have been conveyed into the heart, ſhall once be like the *eyes of a dove waſhed with milk and fitly ſet*, and be admitted to ſee that glorious object, *the Lamb that ſitteth upon the Throne*: Or whether ever theſe tongues that have been *ſet on fire of hell*, and theſe polluted lips that have ſpoke ſo much againſt God, and Heaven, and all his People, and Intereſts, ſhall ever be admitted to ſing theſe heavenly *Halelujahs* amongſt that ſpotleſſe queer of Angels, and that *aſſembly of the firſt born*; or if theſe hands or feet that have been ſo active to commit iniquity, and ſo ſwift to *run after vanity*, ſhall even bee admitted hereafter to carry theſe *Palme Branches*, and to follow the *Lamb where ever hee goeth*; and whether ever theſe hearts that have been indeed *a Bethaven, and houſe of idols*, may yet notwithſtanding, bee a dwelling for the Holy Ghoſt: Though theſe things (wee ſay) and ſuch like may bee the ſubject of many ſad debates to ſome weary ſouls, and cauſe many *toſſings to and fro till the morning*: yet faith can bring all theſe myſteries to light, and looking *within the vail*, can let us ſee thouſands of thouſands who were once as ugly as our ſelves, yet now having *waſhed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*, are admitted to *ſtand before the Throne of God, and ſerve him day and night*.

Now there is that fourthly, which wee promiſed

promiſed to ſpeak of concerning this grace of Faith from theſe words, and it is the abſolute neceſſity that is of the exerciſe of this grace, which is holden forth in that word, *his Commandment*; which doth import theſe three things. 1. That all the Commands that wee can obey without this Commandement of Faith, it is but a polluting of our ſelves, and a plunging of our ſelves in the ditch till our own cloaths abhor us. 2. That God taketh greater delight in the exerciſe of that grace of Faith, then in the exerciſe of any other. And laſtly, that as to the many imperfections which wee have in our obedience, there is a ſweet act of oblivion paſt of them all; if we make conſcience ſeriouſly to obey this command of Faith, which is indeed, the ſweet compend of the Goſpel, all theſe things do moſt clearly appear, in that believing, here is called, *His Commandement*, by way of excellency, as if this were his only Commandement.

But that we may yet a little more particularly point out the abſolute neceſſity of Faith; there are theſe things that ſpeaketh it forth to the full. 1. That though rivers of tears ſhould run down our eyes, becauſe we keep not his Law, though we ſhould never riſe off our knees from prayer, and ſhould all our life time ſpeak to God with the tongue of Angels; and though we ſhould conſtantly obey his Commands: yet without Faith we ſhould never eſcape that eternal ſentence of excommunication from the preſence of the Lord; there being no action that doth pro-

ceed from us which can please the majesty of the Lord, unless it hath its rise from this principle of Faith: as is clear from *Heb.* 11. 6. *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* And though we should offer unto him ten thousand rivers of oyl, and thousands of rams, and should offer up in a burnt sacrifice all the beasts that *are upon the mountains, and the trees that are upon hills*, this should be the answer that God should return to us, *Who hath required these things at your hands? I take no pleasure in these solemn sacrifices*; Because there is no way of attaining peace with God, but through the exercise of Faith, making use of the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ. 2. Let us do our outmost, by all the inventions we can, to bring down our body, and let us separate our selves from all the pleasures of the flesh: yet all our idols shall reign without much contradiction, except once we do attain unto this grace of Faith, which is that *victory whereby we must overcome the world*, and the hand that maketh use of infinite strength for subduing of corruption, making the Christian sweetly to take up that song, *Stronger is he that is with us, than he that is in the world.*

From all this that we have said, both of the sweetness of Faith, and the necessity thereof, we would propose these few considerations, to two or three sorts of persons. 1. There are some who live in that vain imaginary delusion of attaining heaven through a Covenant of Works, and do neglect

neglect to seek salvation by Faith in the righteousnesse of Christ. And to these who build upon this sandy foundation, I shall say but these two words. First, How long shall ye labour *in the fire of very vanity*, do ye ever think to put on the capestone, know ye not that the day is approaching, when your house shall fall about your ears, your confidence shall be rejected, and *your hope shall evanish as a dream, and flee away as a vision of the night*? Secondly, What a monstrous blindnesse, and what an unspeakable act of folly must it be, to say, that Christ was crucified in vain, which yet ye do practically assert, when ye go about to purchase a righteousnesse through the works of the Law.

2. There are some who are secure in their own thoughts concerning their faith: they never questioned the realty of it, they never examined it. O ye whose faith is as old as your selves, ye say ye never knew what it was to dispute: and I may say, ye never knew what it was to believe. Thou profane hypocrite, let me tell thee, a strong faith, and yet strong idols, must needs be a strong delusion; Thou wilt not obey the Lord, thou wilt not pray, thou wilt not believe a threatning in all the Word, thou wilt count all Religion madnesse and foolishnesse, and yet thou wilt perswade thy self, thou Believest in Christ. *O be not deceived, God is not mocked*, and why will ye mock your selves? Shall I tell you that reprobates have a sad Religion, one day they must believe, and obey, and pray, and give a testi-

mony to Godlineſſe : but alas too late, and little to their advantage. Shall not he whom all the Miniſters on earth could ſcarce ever perſwade to believe ſo much, as a heaven or hell, or one threatning in all the Book of God, at laſt be forced to believe their own ſenſe, when they ſhall ſee the Ancient of Days upon the Throne, and ſhall hear the cryes of ſo many thouſand living witneſſes, come out both from heaven and hell, bearing teſtimony to the truth of threatnings and promiſes, that not one jot of them is fallen to the ground, and he who would never be perſwaded to bow a knee to God in earneſt all his life, ſhall he not then pray with greateſt fervency, *that hills and mountains might fall upon him, to cover him from the face of the Lamb* : And he that would never ſubmit to a Command of God, muſt he not at laſt obey that dreadfull Command, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting torment*, &c. Yea, he who was the greateſt mocker in the world, ſhall then confeſſe, that they are bleſt who put their truſt in the Lord, as they are excellently brought in, though in an Apocriphal Book, *Wiſd.* c. 5. 4. Crying out with great terror, while they behold that unexpected ſight of the glorious condition of the Godly. O here is the men ſay they, whom we mocked, whoſe life we accounted madneſſe, and their end diſhonourable : Be wiſe therefore in time, and do that willingly, which ye muſt do by conſtraint, and do that with ſweetneſſe and advantage that ye muſt do at length with loſſe and ſorrow.

Thirdly

Thirdly, There are ſome who certainly have ſome hope of eternal life, but contenteth themſelves with a ſmall meaſure of aſſurance, and theſe I would beſeech, that ye would be more endeavouring to make your calling and election ſure, and would be endeavouring to ſee your names written in the ancient Records of Heaven: And this we ſhall preſſe upon you by ſeveral Arguments. 1. Thoſe ſtrong and ſubtil, and ſoul deſtroying deluſions that are amongſt many, who conceive they do believe (as we were ſaying) and *are pure in their own eyes, who yet are not purged from their iniquities.* O! are there not many of us that are in a golden dream, that ſuppoſe *we are eating, but when we awake our ſoul is empty*, whoſe faith is a metaphyſick notion, that hath no foundation, but mans apprehenſion; and this ſhall never bear us through the gates of death, nor convey us in into eternity of joy. 2. May not this preſſe you to follow after aſſurance, that it is the compendious way to ſweeten all your croſſes: As is clear from *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. where the convictions of this made *Habbakuk* to rejoyce *in the God of his ſalvation; Though the fig tree did not bear fruit, and the labour of the olive did fail, and there were no ſweetneſſe to be found in the vine,* and from *Heb.* 10. 34. where they took joyfully the *ſpoiling of their goods, knowing within themſelves that they had a better and an enduring ſubſtance:* This is indeed that tree which if wee caſt into the waters of *Marah*, they will preſently become ſweet:

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for it is not below the child of hope to be much anxious about these things that he meets with here, when he sincerely knoweth that Commandement shall come forth, *Lift up your head, for the day of your eternal redemption draweth near*, even the day when all the rivers of his sorrow shall sweetly run into the ocean of everlasting delights. 3. A Christian that is much in assurance, he is much in communion and fellowship with God, as is clear from the *Song* 1. 13, 14. and *Song.* 2. 3. where, when once she cometh to that, to be perswaded that Christ was her beloved, then she sat down under his shaddow, and his fruit was pleasant unto her taste; for the assured Christian doth taste of these crums that fall from that higher Table, and no doubt, these that have tasted of that old wine will not straightway desire the new, because the old is better. And then 4. It is the way to keep you from Apostacy, and making defection from God: Faith is that grace that will make you continue with Christ in all his tentations, as is clear from 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. where this is set down as a fruit of making our calling and election sure, that if we do these things we shall never fail: Faith makes a Christian to live a dependent life, for would you know the *motto* of a Christian? It is this, *self diffidence*, and *Christ dependence*, as is clear from that word in the *Song* 8. 5. that while we are walking through this wilderness, *we are leaning upon our welbeloved.* 5. This assurance will

will help a Christian to overcome many tentations. There are four sorts of tentations that assault the Christian; there are temptations of desire, temptations of love, temptations of hope, and temptations of anxiety, all which a Christian through this noble grace of Assurance, may sweetly overcome: he that hath once made Christ his own, what can he desire but him? As Psal. 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord:* What can he love more then Christ, or love beside Christ, all his love being drowned (as it were) in that Ocean of his excellencies, and a sweet complacency found in the enjoyment of him? And as to hope; will not assurance make a Christian cry forth, *Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee?* And when the heart is anxious, doth not assurance make a Christian content to *bear the indignation of the Lord*, and patiently submit unto the crosse, since there is a sweet connexion betwixt his crosse and his Crown, *Rom.* 8. 35, 36. *If he suffer with him, he shall also reign with him.* And lastly, There is this argument to presse you to assurance, that it sweeteneth the thoughts of death; it maketh death unto a Christian, not the king of terrours, but the king of desires: and it is upon these grounds that assurance maketh death refreshfull unto a Christian. 1. He knoweth that it is the funerall of all his miseries, and the birthday of all his blessed and eternal enjoyments. 2. That it is the Coronation day of a Christian, and the day when he shall have that

Marriage

Marriage betwixt Chriſt and him ſweetly ſolemnized: And that when he is to ſtep that laſt ſtep, hee knoweth that death will make him change his place, but not his company: And O that we could once win unto this, to ſeal that concluſion without preſumption, *My beloved is mine, and I am his:* We might without preſumption, ſing one of the ſongs of Sion, even while we are in this ſtrange land, and taking Chriſt in our arms, might ſweetly cry forth, *Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for my eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* Comfort your ſelves in this, that all your clouds ſhall once paſſe away, and that that truth ſhall once come to paſſe which was confirmed by the oath of an Angel, with his hand lifted up towards Heaven, *That time ſhall be no more.* Time ſhall once ſweetly die out in eternity, and ye may be *looking after new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſſe.* O long to be with him, for Chriſt longeth to have you with him.

SERMON VI.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

THere are three moſt precious and cardinal graces, which a Chriſtian ought mainly to purſue: There is that exalting grace of Faith, that comforting grace of Hope, and that aſpiring grace of Love

and if once a Christian did take up that heavenly difference that is between those sister-graces, hee might be provoked to move after them most swiftly, as the chariots of *Aminadab*. And there is this difference between those graces; Faith is a sober and silent grace, Hope is a patient and submissive grace, Love is an ambitious and impatient grace. Faith cryeth out, *O my soul be silent unto God*: Hope cryeth out, I will wait patiently for the Lord, *untill the vision shall speak*; but Love it cryeth out, *How long art thou a coming?* and it is waiting to hear the sound of his feet coming *over the mountains of separation*. That is the Motto of Hope, *Quod defertur non aufertur*, that which is delayed (saith Hope) is not altogether taken away and made void: and that may be the divine embleme of the grace of Love. It is sight infolding desire in its armes, and it is desire cloathed with wings, treading upon delay and impediments. There is this second difference between these graces: the grace of Faith, it embraceth the truth of the promises: the grace of Hope, it embraceth the goodnesse of the thing that is promised; but that exalting grace of Love, it embraceth the *Promiser*: Faith cryeth out, *Hath hee spoken it, Hee will also do it*: Hope cryeth out, *Good is the Word of the Lord, be it unto thy servant according to thy promise*: And Love, it cryeth out in a higher note, *As is the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my well-beloved amongst the sons.* Thirdly, There is that difference between these graces, Faith it overcometh temptations;

tions; Hope, it overcometh difficulties; but Love ſtayeth at home and divideth the ſpoil: There is a ſweet correſpondence between theſe graces in this: Faith it fighteth and conquereth; and Hope it fighteth and conquereth; but Love it doth enjoy the Trophies of the victory. And, Fourthly, there is this difference, the noble grace of Faith, it ſhall once evaniſh into ſight; That noble grace of Hope, it ſhall once evaniſh into poſſeſſion and enjoyment; But that conſtant grace of Love; it ſhall be the eternal companion of a Chriſtian, and ſhall walk in with him unto the ſtreets of the *New Jeruſalem*. And I would aſk you that queſtion, What a day ſhall it be when Faith ſhall cede to ſight? What a day ſhall it be when Hope ſhall yeeld its place to Love, and love and ſight ſhall eternally ſit down and ſolace themſelves in theſe bleſſed myſteries, theſe everlaſting conſolations of Heaven, world without end. And fifthly, there is this difference, leſſe will ſatisfie the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope, that will ſatisfie the grace of Love; Faith, it will be content with the promiſe, and Hope will be content with the thing that is promiſed; but that ambitious grace of Love, it will be onely content with the promiſer. Love glaſpeth its arms about that precious and noble object Jeſus Chriſt; Love is a ſuſpicious grace, It oftentimes cryeth forth *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; So that Faith is oftentimes put to reſolve the ſuſpicions of

ove. I can compare these three graces to nothing so fitly, as to those three great Worthies that *David* had, These three graces, they will break thorow all difficulties, were it a host of Philistines, that so they may pleasure Christ, and may drink of that Well of *Bethlehem*, that Well of everlasting consolation that floweth from beneath the Throne of God: Love is like *Noah's* dove, it never findeth rest for the sole of its foot, till once it be within that Ark, that place of repose Jesus Christ.

And sixthly, There is this last difference twixt them, Faith taketh hold upon the faithfulnesse of Christ; Hope taketh hold upon the goodnesse of Christ; but Love, it taketh hold upon the heart of Christ. And think yee not it must be a pleasant and soul-refreshing exercise, to be continually taken up in imbracing him, thas is that eternal admiration of Angels. Must it not be an excellent life, dayly to bee feeding on the *finest of the wheat*, *and to bee satisfied with honey out of the rock*. O but Heaven must be a pleasant place! And if once we would but taste of the first ripe grapes, and a cluster of wine that groweth in that pleasant land, might not we be constrained to bring up a good report of it.

But now to come to that which wee purpose mainly to speak of at this time. The first thing concerning Faith, that wee proposed from the words, was the object upon which Faith exerciseth it self, which is here set down to bee *the Name of his Son Jesus*

Jesus Christ. And that we may speak to this more clearly, wee shall first speak a little to the negative, what things are not the fit object of Faith, and then to the positive, shewing you how this Name of God, and of His Son Christ, is the sure ground upon which a Christian may pitch his Faith: For the first, yee must know that a Christian is not to build his faith upon sense, nor sensible enjoyments: Sense may bee an evidence of Faith, but it must not bee the foundation of Faith. I know there are some that oftentimes cry out, *Except I put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe*; and indeed it is a mystery unto the most part of us, to bee exercising Faith upon a naked word of promise, abstracted from sense; to love an absent Christ, and to believe on an absent Christ, are the two great mysteries of Christianity. But that sense is no good foundation for Faith, may appear. 1. That Faith which is builded upon sense, is a most unconstant, a most fluctuating and transient Faith. I know sense hath its fits of love, and as it were, hath its fits of Faith: Sometime sense is sick of love, and sometimes sense strong in Faith, but ere six hours go about sense may bee sick of jealousie, and sick of misbelief, as yee will see from *Psal.* 30. 6, sense, that bold thing, it will instantly cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I will never be moved*; but behold how soon it changeth its note, *Thou hides thy face, and I was troubled.* At one time it will cry for

Who is like unto him that pardoneth iniquity, nd that *paſſeth over tranſgreſſions*; but ere many hours go about, it will ſing a ſong pon another key, and cry out, *Why art thou ecome unto mee as a liar, and as waters that ail?* 2. That Faith which is built upon enſe, it wanteth the promiſe of bleſſedneſſe, or this is annexed to believing, that is foun-ed upon the Word, according to that in oh. 20. 29. *Bleſſed are theſe that have not en, and yet have believed*: nor hath that ith that is built upon ſenſe ſuch a ſolide oy waiting on it, as faith that is built upon he naked word of promiſe, as may be clear-d from that word, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. where faith xerciſing it ſelf upon Chriſt not ſeen, mak-h a Chriſtian *to rejoyce with joy unſpeak-ble and full of glory*, a joy that doth not at-nd believing, founded upon ſenſe. 3. That ith that is built upon ſenſe, it giveth not uch glory to God, for faith that is built pon ſenſe, it exalteth not the faithfulneſſe God, it exalteth not the omnipotency of od. I will tell you what is the divinity ſenſe; let me ſee, and then I will believe; t it knoweth not what it is to believe pon truſt, and becauſe *the Lord hath ſpoken his holineſſe*: And in effect, Faith that is ilt upon ſenſe, is no Faith, even as m. 8. *Hope that is ſeen, is no hope*; And erefore, when the Lord ſeeth a Chriſtian aking ſenſe an idol, that hee will not be-ve but when hee ſeeth or feeleth, this doth en provoke the Majeſty of the Lord to ithdraw himſelf from that Chriſtian, and

to

to deny him the sweet influences of heaven and these consolations that are above, so that in an instant hee hath both his sense and his faith to seek.

2. A Christian is not to make his grace the object of his Faith, that is when a Christian doth behold love burning within him when hee doth behold influences to prayer encreasing, and mortification waxing strong hee is not to build his faith upon them, this was condemned in the Church, in *Ezek.* 16. 14. compared with the 15 verse, *I made thee perfect with my comlinesse*: but the use that thou didst make of it, thou *didst put thy trust in thy beauty*, and then thou didst *play the harlot*. It is certain, that grace when it is the object of our Faith, it doth provoke God to blast the lively exercise thereof, and to make a Christian oftentimes have that complaint: *Wo to me, my leanneſſe, my leanneſſe testifieth to my face.* I will tell you three great mysteries of Christianity, about grace. The first is, to ride marches between these two, not to deny what they have, and yet to bee denyed to what they have; many times, there is grace-denying, and not self-denying; but this is that wee would presse upon you to bee denyed to grace, according to that which is recorded of *Moses*, *his face did shine and he knew it not*, hee did misken (as it were) and did not at all bee puffed up with it; for so the words wee conceive may run. Secondly, it is a great difficulty for a Christian to bee denied to his self denial, to bee humble in his being humble: for if pride

an have no other foundation, it will build
t self upon humility; and a Christian will
row proud in this, that hee is growing
umble. Thirdly, It is a difficultie for a
Christian to examine his growing in grace,
nd not bee puffed up; It is certain a Chri-
ian ought to examine his growth in grace
umbly, according to that, *Psal.* 63. 8. *My
ul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand
holdeth mee:* Hee doth not only take notice
f this, that his soul did *follow after God*,
ut of the measure of that pursuit, my soul
followeth hard after thee, and yet sweetly ac-
nowledgeth, it was not his own feet which
rried him, nor his own hand that kept him
om falling.

3. Yee are not to build your Faith upon
our works; and upon the righteousnesse
f the Law: I need not stand long to refute
at practicall Popery that is amongst us,
at thinketh wee can go to heaven through
Covenant of Works. I told you not long
nce, what your going to heaven through
Covenant of Works speaketh; even this
rrid blasphemy; That it was an act of
onstruous folly to send Christ to die for
ners; for, if you can go to heaven with-
t him, was not Christ then crucified in
in. And I would tell you now, that
is speaketh out your damnable ignorance
the weakneſse and deceitfulneſse of your
n hearts. O yee that are so great de-
ders of Salvation by the Covenant of
orks, I beseech you, What is the rea-
that yee break the Covenant of Works

oftner

oftner then any; for there is none that thinketh they will go to heaven this way but these that are the greatest breakers of the Covenant of Works. And is not that inconsistent, and most contradictory divinity, your faith contradicting your practice, and your practice telling you that your faith is a lie.

Fourthly, We must not mix our own righteousnesse with Christ, as the object of our believing: This is indeed an evill that often lodgeth in the bosome of the most refined hypocrite, when Satan cannot prevail to exclude Christ altogether, then he is content with that whoriſh woman, to *divide the childe*, and let the object of our faith be half Christ, and half of *self*; And the truth is many of these poor unwise sons, who stand long in the place of the breaking forth of children, do willingly hearken to this overture, for fear it be presumption for such poor wretches to meddle too boldly with the righteousnesse of Christ; but it were good such weak ones would consider that word, *Rom.* 10. 2. where the Holy Ghost calleth this making use of His righteousnesse, an act of submission, *They have not submitted* (saith he) *unto the righteousneſse of Christ*. O will you not lay this to heart, that our Lord will take your believing, or your putting on his righteousnesse for an act of great humility, and will take your misbelief as a marvelous act of the higheſt pride and presumption.

Fifthly, We are not to make provision the object of our faith. I know there are some that ask the ground of their right to heave

eaven, they will tell us, that God hath been ind to them all their dayes. I would only y to such, *He may be feeding you unto the day f slaughter, and no man knoweth love or hatred y any thing that is before him.* This much of he object of Faith negatively.

And now to speak to it positively, we see he Text holdeth out Christ himself as that xcellent and compleat object of Faith, *This his Commandement, that we believe on the ame of his Son:* and thus Faith closeth with hrist in a fourfold consideration. First, It loseth with God in Christ, not with God imediatly and nakedly; for, hee dwelleth *in ight inaccessible, that no man can approach unto: e is higher then the heaven, what can we do? nd deeper then hell what can we know?* Job 11. herefore wee must approach unto Him hrough a vail, even the vail of Christ His esh, *Heb.* 10. God is a *consuming fire, and of rer eyes then that he can behold iniquity*: and herefore we must first cast our eye upon that essed *Days-man, that laid his hand upon us th*; and look upon God as *in Christ reconling the world to himself*, and so draw near nto him through a Mediator, who is the first nd the last, and he that liveth and was dead, nd is alive for evermore, able to save to the termost all that come unto God by Him, eing he liveth for ever to make intercessin for them. Secondly, Faith closeth with hrist, as tendered freely in a Covenant of omise. We could have had nothing to do th Christ, if he had not been given of the ther, and offered himself in a free Cove-

nant

nant of promise; but he being thus holde
forth upon termes of free love (which do
utterly abominat hyre) and so nodle a pr
clamation issued forth under the great se
of Heaven, *That whosoever will, may come a*
drink of the water of life freely; Upon th
the poor creature draweth near by vertue
a right, and stretching out the armes of mo
enlarged affections, doth run upon him wit
that joyful shout, *My Lord and my God*; a
then maketh an absolute resignation of it se
unto him; which is holden out in the Scrip
ture by that sweet expression of *kissing*
the Son. And there are three parts of Chri
blessed Body that the Christian must ende
vour to kisse and imbrace: the mouth
Christ, the hand of Christ, and the feet
Christ: the kissing of his feet importing t
exercise of love, the kissing of his hands t
exercise of subjection, and the kissing of h
mouth the exercise of communion and fe
lowship with him. Thirdly, Faith close
with Christ as the purchaser and meritorio
cause of all the good we receive: He is t
person that hath purchased all these thin
unto us, and there is not one blink of lov
there is not the smallest enjoyment that
Christian meeteth with, but it is the price
the blood of Christ; Christs precious blo
was laid down for it. Fourthly, Faith cl
seth with Christ as the efficient and work
of all our mercies; all our enjoyments th
are far from him as the efficient cause, that
He is the worker of all these things in
it is his precious fingers that must acco
pl

pliſh that bleſſed work of grace, and they are from Chriſt as the diſpenſer of theſe things; Chriſt is the great Steward of Heaven that doth communicate unto Believers all the Treaſures of the Higher Houſe; *For Him hath God the Father ſealed.* O but that word that Chriſt once ſpake, is much verified by Himſelf, *It is more bleſſed to give, then to recieve*; Chriſt is that fountain and treaſure in whom all our gifts and graces are treaſured up; for, before the bleſſing come to Believers, they come to Chriſt as the Head, according to that word, 2 *Tim.* 1 9. *Which grace was given to us in Him, before the foundations of the world were laid*: It was given to Chriſt before the world was made, and for that end, that it might be communicate unto all his Members, and ſo out of His fulneſſe we all receive, and grace for grace.

But, ſecondly, The Text holdeth forth more particularly this excellent object of Faith, to be the Name of his Son, *That ye believe in the Name of his Son.* And here indeed we may be at a ſtand. It is long ſince *Agur* did *non plus* all the world with that queſtion, *What is his Name? and what is his Sons Name, if thou canſt tell?* how little a thing can be known of Him! and O how brutiſh is this generation! that know ſo much leſſe then might be known of Him in ſuch a day of the Goſpel. But yet we may ſpeak a little, according to our weak meaſure of Faith, as cloſing with the Name of Chriſt. His Name is His glorious Attributes, by which he revealeth ſo much

of Himſelf in the Scriptures, as poor mortals can take up. Wee did ſhew you before, that there was three of theſe that were the main pillars of juſtifying Faith, *Faithfulneſſe*, *Omnipotency*, and *His infinite Love and Mercy*: And how from theſe may bee anſwered all the objections of ſenſe, of carnall reaſon, and of miſbelief, ariſing from convictions of unworthineſſe. And certain it is, that Faith in all its conflicts, maketh much uſe of the Names of Chriſt. And there is not an objection that a poor tempted ſoul can make, but Faith can frame an anſwer to it, out of ſome of theſe excellent Names of God, or of his Son Chriſt. It would bee a more longſome work then I intend to let you ſee this in all; But I ſhall onely inſtance in that *One glorious Name of God*, by which he proclaimeth his glory, *Exod.* 34. *The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſſe and truth, Keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, and that will by no means clear the guilty*, &c. I think there are ſeven ordinary objections which may bee anſwered from that place. First, It is an ordinary objection which miſbelievers do make, that they are under the ſtrength of their corruption, that they are black as the *Tents of Kedar* and not beautifull *as the Curtains of Solomon*. And doth not the firſt letter of that Name anſwer this, that he is a *mercifull Lord*: the one importing his ability to ſave, and to bring down every high imagination? The other importing, his infinite delight to he-

those who have no strength, and are under the power of their adversaries, the power of God being of no larger extent then his love. There is that second objection of misbelief, that wee have nothing to commend us to Christ: But all that wee have to boast of, are infirmities and imperfections: And this is abundantly answered from that second letter of his Name, that he is *Gracious*: which importeth the freedom of the dispensations of his love that hee walketh not with us, according to that rule of merit, but according to that golden and excellent rule of *Love*. It is a great dispute whether Mercy or Grace be the greatest wonder, Whether the love of Christ, or the freedom of it bee the greatest mystery: Sure both these put together make up a matchlesse wonder? Thirdly, Misbelief will object, that wee have forsaken him dayes without number, and that wee cannot trace back our apostasie unto the first day of its rise: And is not that abundantly answered from that letter of his Name, that hee is long suffering? *This being that Glorious attribute in God, the glory of which hee desireth to magnifie above all his Name.* Fourthly, Misbelief doth ordinarily propose this objection, that wee have multiplied our transgressions, and *have committed whoredoms under every green tree*, and have *given gifts to our lovers*, even hyring our idols: So that wee may take up that lamentation, *is not our sin great*, and *our transgression infinit*: And is not that also answered from that letter of his Name, that hee is *abundant in goodnesse*?

That though sin abound in us, yet grace doth much more superabound in him. Wee confesse indeed, that there are some that may walk under that condition, that if they had no other exercise throughout eternity, but to make confession, they might confesse and never make any needlesse repetition: And truely in some respect, it is a mercy that we are *mysteries* unto our self: for, if wee did know compleatly the *seven* abominations of our hearts, and those mysterious actings of the body of death, we would be in hazard *to choise strangling and death, rather then life*: Yet may not one glimpse of that *abundant goodnesse* satisfie us, and calm the storm. Fifthly, Saith misbelief, wee know that we have broken our Vowes and Covenants with God, and that all these things that wee have taken on, have been but as flax before the fire of tentation; so that wee have no hope that he will have mercy upon these that have broken wedlock, and have not been stedfast in his Covenant. But is not that abundantly answered from that letter of His Name, *That hee is abundant in truth*: which speaketh, That though wee deny our selves, yet he abideth faithfull, and doth not alter the word that hath gone out of his mouth. It is the infinite blessednesse of man that though hee bee changeable, yet they have to do with one that is an unchangeable being. Sixthly; There is that objection: That notwithstanding all these things are matters of encouragement to some, yet they know not whether or not the lot of ever-

everlasting love have fallen upon them: And whether their names be in the ancient records of Heaven. But this is answered from that letter of His Name, *hee keepeth mercy for thousands?* which sheweth us that great number of those upon whom the lot of everlasting love shall fall: And if there were no other sentence in all the Scripture, this might be a sufficient matter of a Song, and might make us cry out, *Who is like unto him, whose compassions have no end*, And who desires to *magnifie his mercy above all his works?* And lastly, Misbelief maketh this objection, They have sinned not onely against light, not onely against vowes, not onely after much enjoyment of God, but even after the application of threatnings: So that they conceive, *that their Maker will not have mercy upon such.* Yet this is fully answered likewise from that letter of His Name, *He forgiveth iniquity, trangression and sin*: which three words doth abundantly speak forth; That there is no transgression which he will not pardon, there being but one particular amongst all that innumerable number of sins which lodgeth in the heart of fallen man, that he declared unpardonable: And there is none of our diseases that is above the infinit arte of love, and concerning which we can take up that complaint, *There is no balm in Gilead*, and *there is no Physician there.* And though providence may master up many impossibilities, yet let Faith take the promise in the one hand, and impossibilites in the other, and

desire God to reconcile them; that if we cannot see any connexion between Providence and the Word, yet may we reflect upon the omnipotency of God, that can make things that are seeming contrary sweetly to agree together, the Commentary will never destroy the Text, nor Providence will never destroy the faithfulnesse of God: And let me give you this advice, that those objections of misbelief which you cannot answer, and, in a manner putteth you to a *non plus*, and when ye have looked over all the *Names of God*, ye cannot finde an answer to them, sleight them and cover them, as we have often told you was the practice of believing *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 19. where that strong objection of misbelief appearing before his eyes, the *deadnesse of his body*, and *the barrenesse of Sarahs womb*. It is recorded of him, *he considered not these things*: as it were, he had a divine transition from the objections of misbelief to the acting of Faith: and this is clear from *Matth.* 15. 25, 26. Where that strong objection of misbelief being proposed against that woman, the she was not within the compasse of Christs Commission, she hath a noble way of answering with this, *Lord have mercy upon me*. And (if so we may speak) Faith hath a kind of divine impertinency in answering the objections of misbelief; or rather a holy sleighting of them that gaineth the victory, when cavilling with tentations will not do it.

The like also may be instanced in His Son's Name: O how glorious titles are given him *that Prince of the Kings of the earth*, and of

that *Plant of renown*, upon which the weakeſt faith may caſt anchor, and ride out the greateſt ſtorm; I ſhall not detain you long on this ſubject, but this we would have you know, that there is no ſtrait nor difficulty that a Chriſtian can be expoſed unto, but there is ſome name or attribute of Chriſt that may ſweetly anſwer that difficulty, and make up that diſadvantage. Is a Chriſtian expoſed unto afflictions and troubles in a preſent world? Let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is the *ſhadow of a great rock in a wearied land*; Is a Chriſtian under inward anxiety and vexation of mind? Let him comfort himſelf in this, *That Chriſt is the God of peace, and of all conſolation*; Is a Chriſtian under darkneſſe and confuſion of ſpirit? Let him comfort himſelf in this, That Chriſt is the *Father of lights*, and is the *eternal wiſdom of God*; Is a Chriſtian under the convictions of this, that he is under the power and dominion of his luſts? Let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is Redemption; yea (that I ſtay no longer) if it were poſſible that a Chriſtian could have a neceſſity that he could not find a name in Chriſt to anſwer it, he may lawfully frame a name to Chriſt out of any promiſe in all the Book of God, and he ſhould find it forthcoming for the relieving and making up of that neceſſity, God would not diſappoint his expectation.

There is yet one thing further, in reference to the object of Faith, which we ſhall deſire you to take notice of; and it is the

way of Faiths closing with its noble object, and its resting on him: and this we conceive may be excellently taken up by our considering of the many several names that Faith getteth in Scripture, beyond any other of the graces of the Spirit. It is called looking, *Isa.* 45 22. *Look unto me*: It is called *abiding in Christ*, Joh. 15. 4. *Abide in mee*: It is called a keeping silence unto God, *Psal.* 37. 7. *My soul trust in God*; Or as the word is in the Original, *My soul be silent unto God*; and that in *Psal.* 62. 1. *My soul waiteth*; Or as the word is, *Truly my soul is silent unto God.* Likewise Faith is called a leaning, *Psal.* 7. 15. *I have leaned upon thee from my mothers womb.* Faith is called an *eating of Christs flesh*, John 6. 53. Faith is called a *casting of our burden upon God*, Psal. 55. 22. *Cast your burden upon God*: and Faith it is called *a coming unto God*, *Matth.* 11. 28. And according to these different names, there are these seven noble properties & marchless differences of this grace of Faith. The first is, That this is this grace by which a Christian doth enjoy much communion with God: Hence it is called a *looking*: which importeth, that Faith is a continuall contemplation of the immortal Soul upon that precious and excellent object Jesus Christ. There is that second property of faith, That it is that grace by which a communion with God is maintained: Hence it is called an *abiding in God.* It is that grace which maketh Christ and the believer to dwell together. The third property of Faith is, that it is a most submissive grace: Hence it is called

led a *keeping ſilence unto God*: Faith as it were, it knoweth not what it is to repine. It is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to miſconſtruct Chriſt. It is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to paſſe an evil report upon Chriſt. Faith it will promiſe good things to a Chriſtian in the darkeſt night; for, when Love aſketh Faith that queſtion, Iſa. 21. 11, 12. *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* Or, when ſhall the morning break? Faith anſwereth it with the words that follow, (onely a little inverting the order) *The night cometh, and alſo the morning*; the morning is approaching, that admitteth of no following night. There is that fourth property of Faith, It is the grace which keepeth a Chriſtian in perſeverance, by its building upon the rock. Hence it is called a *leaning upon God*; for a Chriſtian by Faith doth perpetually joyn himſelf to Chriſt, ſo that what ever trouble hee be caſt into, by Faith hee cometh up out of *that wilderneſſe, leaning upon his beloved*, and by Faith hee is led up *to the Rock that is higher then hee*, where he may ſit in ſafety, and even *laugh at death and deſtruction* when aſſailing him. There is that fifth property of Faith, That is the grace that bringeth ſatisfaction unto the ſpirituall ſenſes of a Chriſtian, by a cloſe and particular application of Chriſt the nourishment of the ſoul. Hence it is called an *eating of the fleſh of Chriſt*. There are three ſenſes that Faith ſatisfieth, Faith ſatisfieth

fieth the sense of sight, it satisfieth the sense of taste, and it satisfieth the sense of touch: Faith will make a Christian *handle that eternall word of life*: Faith will make a Christian see *that noble plant of renown*; And Faith will make a Christian *taste and see how gracious the Lord is*. And no doubt, these that have once satisfied their sight, they will be longing to satisfie their taste. There is that sixth property of Faith, It is that grace which giveth rest unto a Christian: Hence it is called a *casting of our burden upon him*: It is, as it were, the soul giving unto Christ that unsupportable yoke of our iniquities, and taking from Christ that easie and portable yoke of his Commandements. And seventhly, There is that last property of Faith, It is that grace by which Sanctification is promoved: Hence it is called a *coming to Christ*. It is the soul in a divine motion and travelling from the land of *Egypt* unto the land of *Canaan*: Faith it is the soul in a pleasant motion from the land of the north, the land of our captivity, unto that land of perfect liberty, all along going out *by the footsteps of the flock, and walking in that new and living way* even in Him *who is the Way, the Truth and the Life*.

And now for a more full application of this, we shall speak but to two things further. 1. We would have it considered, that there are some that come unto the Covenant of Promise with lesse difficulty, and after a more divine and evangelick way; and there are some that close with Christ, in a more difficu

difficult and legall way; there are ſome that before they can come to mount Sion, they muſt dwell fourty dayes at mount Sinai. There are ſome, before the decreet of heaven ſhall be given to them, they muſt roar as an ox, and muſt cover themſelvs with ſackcloath, having aſhes upon their heads, we muſt be a *Benoni* before we be *Benjamin*, that is, we muſt be a ſon of ſorrow, before we can be a ſon of *conſolation*. But this is certain, that Chriſt leadeth ſometimes ſome to himſelf through a valley of roſes: And I would only have you taking notice of theſe two, which though we conceive they be not infallible in the rule, yet oftentimes experience maketh them out to be truth. 1. That there are three ſorts of perſons who are moſt ordinarily brought under great terrour, ere they cloſe with Chriſt. Firſt, Theſe who have committed ſome groſſe and abominable ſin that is moſt contradicting unto the light of nature. Secondly, That perſon that ſinneth much againſt light, before converſion: Hence it is obſerved in all the Books of the Goſpel, and in the book of the *Acts*, there was a more Goſpel and love way of converting the Gentiles, then was of converting the Jews, ſee *Act.* 2. 37. there is a ſharp Law exerciſe among them who had crucified the Lord of Life, and *Act.* 9. *Paul* that had been a grievous perſecuter, at his converſion, he is firſt ſtricken dead to the ground before he be made a captive of the love of Chriſt, and conſtrained to cry out, *What wilt thou have me to do*: but look to *Act.* 8. and chap. 19. and

and there ye will find a more fair and smooth way of begetting sons to Christ. And, thirdly, that person that is much in conceit of his own righteousnesse, he useth to be brought to Christ through much terrour and exercise of the Law: that is clear in *Paul*, his condition also, *Phil.* 3. and *Act.* 9. compared, and certainly, who ever thinketh to come that length in self abasement, and will count as the Apostle doth in that Chapter, must dwell many dayes at mount Sinai, and learn his Arithmethick there. 2. We would have you taking notice of this, that though the person that is brought in to Christ in a more smooth and evangelick way may have the preheminency of the person that is brought to Christ after a more legall and terrible way in some things. Yet we conceive, that a Christian that is brought to Christ through much of the exercise of the Law, and through many of the thunderings of mount Sinai, after he hath wone to see his right of Christ, he is more constant in the exercise of Faith; and the reason of it is, because that an ordinary ground of mistbelief is our not distinct uptaking either of the time of our conversion, which is oftentimes hid from these persons that are converted in a more evangelick way, as likewise this, that those persons that are brought to Christ in a more Gospelchariot, are sometimes put to debates, whether ever they were under the exercise of the Law, and this maketh them often (as it were) to raze the foundation, and

to

to cry forth, *My hope, and my ſtrength is periſhed from the Lord.* And now to ſhut up our diſcourſe, we ſhall adde this one word of exhortation; that ye would carefully lay hold upon that noble object, and exerciſe your faith upon him; and I ſhall ſay but this, that all theſe that have this noble grace of Faith, and that are heirs of that everlaſting inheritance: There is a fourfold Crown prepared for you; There is a Crown of life that is prepared for him that ſhall *fight the good fight of Faith*; but what may you ſay is a Crown of Life, except we have joy waiting upon that life; for what is life without joy, but a bitterneſſe, and a burthen to it ſelf; Therefore ye ſhall have *a crown of joy*; but what were a crown of Life, and a crown of Joy, except we had the grace of Holineſſe, and were compleat in that; Therefore, ye ſhall have alſo *a crown of Righteouſneſſe*: But, what were Life Joy and Righteouſneſſe, without Glory; Therefore ye ſhall have likewiſe *a Crown of Glory*: But what of all theſe, if that Crown ſhould once fall from our head, and we ſhould be deprived of our Kingdom? Therefore, take this to make up all the reſt, it is *an eternal crown of Glory.* That word in *Prov.* 27. near the cloſe, *The Crown*, ſaith *Solomon*, *doth not endure for ever*: But this precious Crown that the hands of Chriſt ſhall fix upon the head of an overcoming Chriſtian, this is the motto that is graven upon it, *Unchangeable and Eternall, Eternal and unchangeable*, And O what

a day suppose ye shall that be, when that precious Crown shall be put upon our heads! What think you will be the difference betwixt Christ and the Believers in heaven. They shall have these four crowns which are indeed one; but Christ shall have upon his head many Crowns, according to that word *Rev.* 19. 12. But let me say one word also to you who are strangers from God, and are destitute of the grace of Christ, and will not by faith close with this excellent Object. There is a fourfold crown that once shall be put upon your heads; but do not misinterpret the vision: There is a difference betwixt the *Butler* and the *Baker*; ye may prophesie good things to your self, but there is a crown of death which ye shall once have put upon your heads; ye shall be alwayes dying, and never able to die: there is a crown of sorrow that ye shall have put upon your head when ye shall eternally sigh forth that lamentation, *O to be anihilat, and reduced unto nothing*; when the reduction of you into nothing would be a heaven, when ye shall be tormented in those everlasting flames. And I would say this by the way, ye will be all miserable, comfortlesse one to another, there will be no ground of consolation that ye shall reap, for the community of your sorrow shall increase the degrees of that sorrow. And there is another crown also that ye shall put on, and that is a crown of *sin*, instead of that *crown of righteousnesse*: would you know your exercise, O ye that are predestinate unto these everlasting pains? Would ye know

you

your exercise? It is this, ye shall eternally *blaspheme*, and *curse* the God that made you. I am perswaded of this, that the terrours of hell will afflict you more, and doth, then that of the sinning perpetually in hell: Ye would think nothing many of you to be in hell, if there were no pain there; for the exercise of sin it will be your delight and life: but be perswaded of it, that when your conscience is awakened, the exercise of sinning shall exceedingly aggreage your pain. And there is this crown lastly, that ye shall put on, and that is the *crown of shame*: The Prophet *Isaiah* maketh mention of *a crown of pride*; but ye that have put on that crown of pride, ye shall once put on that crown of everlasting *confusion and shame*, when ye shall not be able to lift up your eyes to him *whom ye have peirced*: I would fain desire you to know, what will be your exercise at these three dayes; what will be your exercise when death shall be summonding you to remove, and ye shall first be entered heirs unto these everlasting pains; I am perswaded ye will reflect much? Will ye not reflect upon many Sermons that ye have heard, wherein ye have been invited to partake of the sweet offers of Salvation. I remember of one, that upon his death bed cryed forth, *A world for time, a world for one inch of time*, one that perhaps did hold his head high, and no doubt was greater than the greatest here, his Crown could not purchase on inch of time, but dying with this, *Call time again, call time again*; that petition was denyed, and

and so it shall be, I fear, to the most part that are here. I think it was a pretty Hieroglyphick of the *Egyptians*, they painted Time with three heads; The first head that painted out time that *was* past, *Was a greedy Wolfe gaping*, which importeth this, That our time past was mispent, and there was nothing left, but like a Wolfe to gape for it again: And there was that second head of a *roaring Lyon*, *round*, which import the time present, and for this end was so painted, that people might lay hold upon their present opportunities; otherwise, it would be the matter of their ruine, and of their eternall undoing. And there was that last head, which was of a *deceitfull Dog*, *fawning*; which signified, that people they deceive themselves with the time to come, thinking they will be religious at their death, and that they will overcome at their death, but this is flattery, no better then the fawning of a mad Dog. I think wee may learn much of this, even to be provoked to lay hold upon our golden opportunities, that wee sell not our time but that wee *buy* it. There are two things that a Christian must not sell, that is, sell not *the truth* but buy it, and sell not *your time but buy it*. I am perswaded of this, that one moment of time is worth ten thousand worlds, if improven: And I would ask you, what advantage shall yee have of all things that yee have tormented your selves about, when time shall be no more? I suppose indeed, this is an ordinary evil amongst

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the people of this age, of which we have our own ſhare and proportion. There are many that envy Godlineſſe, and the Godly, *The excellent ones that are in the earth*, that think it a pleaſure to vent their malice againſt ſuch: I know that ordinary practice it is older by a thouſand years then themſelves, that they perſecute Godlineſſe under the name of hypocriſie: They call Godlineſs hypocriſie, and upon that account they begin and ſpeak maliciouſly againſt it: onely I would aſk you this queſtion, What will ye ſay in that day when Chriſt will aſk that queſtion at you, that *Gideon* aſked at *Zeba* and *Zalmuna*, who are theſe that ye killed with your tongue? Muſt it not be anſwered, *every one did reſemble the perſon of a King?* O will ye not believe! will ye not cloſe with Chriſt? I know it is ordinary that we run upon theſe two extreams, Sometimes we do not believe the threatnings of the Law, and ſometimes we will not believe the promiſes of the Goſpel. But I would only deſire to know, what if it had been ſo ordered in the infinite wiſdome of God, that all the letters of this Book ſhould have been threatnings? what ſhould have been our lot, and all the promiſes ſhould have been ſcraped out of it. But certainly this muſt be your lot, all the promiſes of the Book of this Covenant ſhall be taken from you, and all the curſes thereof ſhall be a flying roll that ſhall enter within your houſes, and ſhall there eternally remain. Know this, O ye that are enemies to Chriſt, know it and think upon it,

it, *Every battel of the warriour is with con-fused noise, and with garments rolled in blood*. But that war that Christ shall have against the *hypocrites in Zion*, and those that are ig-norant of him, and will not close with him, it shall be *with fewell of fire, and eternal in-dignation.* O what will be your thoughts, suppose you, when Christ shall come with that two edged sword of the fury of the Lord, to enter to fight with you? It is no delightsome exercise. Oh that ye were not *almost*, but *altogether perswaded to be Chri-stians*, and that once Christ might conque you with that two edged sword *that proceed-eth out of his mouth*, that so ye might sub-ject your selves to Him, and make Him the object of your Faith. Now to Him that hath engraven upon His *vesture, and on his thigh, that He is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords*, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON Concerning the Great-Salvation.

Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THis everlaſting Goſpel, which is preached unto you, is that glorious Star, which muſt lead us to the place where bleſſed Chriſt doth ly. This Goſpel and glad tydings of the Great Salvation is come near unto you: And Chriſt is ſtanding at the everlaſting doors of your hearts, deſiring that ye would open unto him. There is that one great requeſt which heaven, this day, hath to preſent unto you, and it is, That ye would at laſt imbrace this Great Salvation freely offered by him. It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that ſince the dayes of your fathers, and ſince the beginning of your own dayes, ye have ſtopped your ears from that ſweet and

and chaunting voice of this blessed Charmer. *Ye would never dance to Christ when he pyped, neither would ye weep to him when he lamented.*

But to come to the words which we have read unto you: The Apostle in the former Chapter hath been discoursing most divinely, of the matchless and incomparable excellencies which are in our blessed Lord Jesus; And in the first verse of this second Chapter, he draweth forth an exhortation from his former Doctrine, which in short is this, That they would take heed to the blessed Doctrine of the Gospel: *And not at any time to let it slip out of our minds*, and that they would keep this Gospel as a Jewel of great price, and would not sell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this exhortation he presseth by two Arguments.

The first Argument is in the second *verse*, where he saith, *If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, &c.* That is, if the transgression of the Law, which was delivered but by the Ministry of *Angels*, and every disobedience to it was so severely punished; Let that provoke you to take heed, that ye transgresse not the precious Gospel which was spoken by the Lord himself.

The second Argument is in the words which we have read unto you, and it is taken from the certain and infallible stroak of the Justice of God, which shall come upon those who slight this Great Salvation

it is impossible (saith he) that there can be a city of refuge for these who slight this *Great Salvation*.

Now in the words which wee have read, here are these six things to be considered.

I. First, That it is an evil incident to the hearers of this precious Gospel and Great Salvation, to slight and undervalue it; This is clearly presupposed in the words, otherwise there had been no ground or accesse for the Apostle to threaten so terrible things against the slighters of it.

II. The second thing to bee considered in the words, is, That the stroak and ruine of those who slight this Great Salvation, is certain, and infallible, it will surely come upon them: This is clear from these words, *How shall we escape?* As if he had said, there is no imaginable way for us to escape, if wee neglect (this) so *Great Salvation*: wee may have a city of refuge when wee are pursued by the Law; or, when wee are pursued by afflictions, and wee may escape when wee are pursued otherwayes by the Justice of God; but if once wee slight this Great Salvation, there remaineth no city of refuge (no door of escape left open) unto us: for there will the person flee that slighteth this *Great Salvation?*

III. There is this third thing whereof we will take notice from the words, That the stroak of the Justice of God cometh justly upon them who slight this Great Salvation; for truely it is a most equal and reasonable stroak, which is also clear from the words,

How

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation! where he puts it home to their consciences, as if he had said, think yee not that it is just and righteous that (if yee slight the Great-Salvation) there should not be a door of escape left open unto you? Hee putteth the question home to their conscience to answer, yea, or no.

IV. The fourth thing to bee considered in the words, is this, That the slighting this Great-Salvation is a sin that hath many aggravations which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two great aggravations from the words which I have read; The first *great aggravation* in that word of the Text, *Great Salvation*, as if he had said, if it were not a *Great Salvation*, yee might have some cloak or excuse for your slighting of it: but seeing it is such a great and eternal Salvation there is now no cloak left for your sin. The second aggravation is from the certainty of this Salvation: in these words, *Which at first began to be spoken by the Lord: and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him*, viz. the *Apostles*, whereby he telleth them, this Great Salvation is no notion nor fancy; but a most certain, sure, and real Salvation, which they slight.

V. The fifth thing whereof wee shall take notice from the words, is this, That there are no persons (be who they will, Minister or people) who slight this Great-Salvation that shall have a door of escape. Hence it is, that the Apostle putteth himself among the rest, saying, *How shall wee escape*; if we neglect

neglect so great salvation; That is, *How shall* Paul, *escape, if I neglect so great salvation*; and so frustrat the grace of God?

VI. Sixthly, We would take notice of this, from the words, That not only heart despising of this Great Salvation, but even also the very neglecting of it, hath a certain infallible and unspeakable ruine attending upon it.

Now before wee begin to speak to any of these six things (which we have observed from the words) There are these two things whereunto we shall speak a little for clearing of the words. First, What is meaned here by *Great salvation*; Secondly, How it is said, that Christ was the *first preacher of it*.

First, Wee conceive, that by the Great-salvation, is understood the Gospel, as is clear, *Eph.* 1. 13. Where it is called, *the Gospel of our salvation*, and *Act.* 13. 26. it it called *the word of this salvation*; So that by the word of this Salvation, is understood the Gospel, and these precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive, it may be called Great-Salvation, in these eight respects.

1. First, It is called the Great-Salvation, in respect of the price that was laid down for it: There being no lesse price laid down to purchase this Great-Salvation, then the *blood of the Son of God*. From whence then doth Salvation flow unto you? It comes running to you in a stream of the blood of the Son of God. This is clear, *Heb.* 9. 12. *Neither by the blood of Goats and Calves; but by his own blould he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

II. Secondly,

II. Secondly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the many difficulties and oppositions which ly in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments (suppose ye) lay in Christs way, before he could accomplish and bring about this Great Salvation? Was not the Justice of God to be satisfied? Was he not to die, and be made like unto one of us? Was he not to ly in the grave? And was he not to bear the torments of hell, before this Great-Salvation could be accomplished, and brought to passe? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this Great Salvation, that if all the Angels in Heaven had been set to the work, they had been all crushed under it: had it been but that one great impediment to *satisfie the Justice*, and pacifie the wrath of God, even that was a passe, through which none could go, but the eternal Son of God. It was so guarded that none durst adventure to enter it (much lesse could any win through it) save he only, *who was mighty to save.*

III. Thirdly, It is called a Great Salvation in respect of that high estimation which the Saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the Saints of this Gospel Salvation! There is no mercy which they think comparable to this, all other mercies are but little *Zoars* in comparison of this great Mercy, and Gospel Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of these noble effects which this Salvation bringeth about, and produceth.

Some

ome of the great effects of the Gospel? *David* hath cleared, *Psal.* 19.7,8,9,10. Is not this great effect (of this Gospel Salvation) to ring us out of nature into an estate of grace? nd that is an effect of this Great Salvation? s not this a great effect, to make us who ere enemies, become friends? And that is n effect of this Great Salvation? Is not this great effect, to make us who were moving the way to hell, move in the way to heaen? And that is an effect of this Great Salvation. Is not this a great effect, to make us ho were *far off*, to be now *made near*? And et that is an effect of this Great Salvation. nd is not this a great effect, to make us *who ere darkneſſe, become light in the Lord*? and hat is the great effect of this Gospel Salvatin: Yea, I may say, time would fail me to tell fall the great effects of this Great Salvation; ut O will yee come and see, and that will ft resolve the question unto you, what the ble effects of this Great Salvation are.

V. Fifthly, It is called a Great Salvation, respect of the great advantages which th redound to the person who imbraceth . First, Is not Heaven a noble advantage? d that is the gain, which attendeth the mbracers of this Great Salvation. Secondly, not Jesus Christ a notable advantage? d yet hee is the advantage which attendeth e imbracers of this Great Salvation: hirdly, Is not eternall communion with d a notable advantage? And that advange attendeth the imbracers of this Great lvation. Fourthly, Is not eternal libera-

tion from the body of death, a great advan
tage? and that attendeth the imbracers o
this Great Salvation. Fifthly, Is not eter
nall singing in the enjoyment of God a grea
advantage? and that attendeth the imbracer
of this Salvation. Sixthly, Is not eternal see
ing of God as he is, a great and noble advan
tage? And yet this (as all the former) atten
deth the imbracers of this Great Salvation
Yea, would ye be rich? O then imbrace th
Great Salvation. Would ye be honourable
Come and imbrace this Great Salvation
Would ye be eternally happy? O then com
and partake of this Great Salvation.

VI. Sixthly, It is called a Great Salvation
in respect of all other Salvations that eve
were accomplished. There was never a sa
vation, or victory obtained by any General o
Captain (unto a Land or People) that coul
have the name of Great Salvation in comp
rison of this.

VII. Seventhly, It is called a Great-Salv
tion, in respect of the authority of it. W
have spoken of the greatnesse (as to the m
ritorious cause) of it, and how great things
doth effectuate: and also in respect of th
authority of it, it is a Great-Salvatio
Would ye know who is the Author of th
Great-Salvation? It is Christ, *Heb.* 5. 9.
became the Author of eternal Salvation to
them that obey him. And must not this Salv
tion be suitable to him who is the Author
it. This is one of the most noble and irra
ant beams of the Majesty of the Son of G
the Mediator, that he is the Author of t
Great Salvation.

VIII. Eighthly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the continuance and duration of it. It is not a salvation which is but for a day: but it is an eternal Salvation, *Heb.* 9. 12. *He obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Now the second thing whereunto we shall speak, for clearing of the words, is this, *viz.* How it is said, That Christ was the first Preacher of this eternal Salvation. We do not think that the words are thus to be understood, that the Gospel, and this Great Salvation was never preached before Christ came in the flesh; but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. First, That all the preaching of this Great Salvation under the Law, did come very far short in the point of fulness, in comparison of Christs preaching of it; Therefore is Christ said to be the first Preacher of this Great Salvation: As if he had said, I know *Adam*, he preached of this Great Salvation: and *Enoch*, he preached of this Great Salvation: And the twelve Patriarchs, they preached of this Great Salvation: And all the Prophets who went before Christ, and are now in heaven, they preached of this Great Salvation; But all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching in comparison of Christs; for, *Never man spake as he spake.* Thus Christ was the first great preacher of this Great Salvation.

II. Secondly, This may be the meaning of it, that Christ was the first Preacher of this Great Salvation, in respect of his clear

way of preaching of it: for hee was the first Preacher of it without Types and Shadows, hee was the first Preacher of it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the Spirit.

III. Thirdly, The meaning of this (that Christ was the first Preacher of this Great Salvation) may relate to his appearing to *Adam* in Paradise, when he became the first and great Preacher of this Salvation, when hee did speak that word unto him, *The Seed of the Woman shall tread down the head of the Serpent.* The first glorious preaching of this Great Salvation was, when Christ preached it to *Adam* in Paradise. And that was the first and glorious morning of this blessed Gospel.

Now we shall speak a little to the first of these six things which we have observed from the words, *viz.*

That there are many within the visible Church, who are neglecters and slighters of this Great Salvation; (do yee not all take with it?) It is clear, *Matth.* 23. toward the close, and chap. 22. 5. Where these persons being invited to come to the marriage or feast of the Gospel, It is said of them *They made light of it.* Which are the same words in our Text. And *Luke* 14. 18. When they were invited to come, it is said *They all with one consent began to make their excuse.* And *Isa.* 28. 2. *This is the rest wherewith yee shall make them weary to rest, this is the refreshing, yet they will not hear.* Now is there a person here who dare deny this charge, that hee is a slighter of this Great Salvation

Salvation? I confesse I am afraid, that ye will not take with it; Therefore I shall propose eighth sorts of persons who are slighters of this Great-Salvation. And I charge you, as ye will answer to God one day, that ye search your hearts, whether ye be among the number (in the Catalogue) of the slighters of this Great Salvation.

1. The first sort of persons, who are slighters of this Great Salvation, are these persons who go about to establish their own righteousnesse, and will not submit to the righteousnesse of Christ: (in a word) it is that sort of persons, who think they may win to heaven by a Covenant of Works, and will not take the Gospels way of travelling to heaven in the Covenant of Grace. And surely there is not a person here, who hath not that cursed inclination to be as little obliged to Christ (for his Salvation) as he can. We would go to Heaven without *the Way*, which is Christ. And (believe me) there are many in this congregation, who go thus about to establish their own righteousnesse. And I shall propose six sorts of persons who all under the first rank.

1. The first sort are these who trust on their own civility, and think these will carry them to heaven; These are the persons who go about to establish their own righteousnesse. Say they, I defy the world to lay any thing to me, *I was evermore an honest man*; and I trust therefore that I shall go to heaven; But I say to thee, (O atheist that thou art) thou shalt never win to

heaven by these means, till thou come to Christ with this, *All my righteousnesse is like filthy rags.*

2. The second sort are these, who build their confidence upon their denial of their good works, but yet come never this length to make use of Jesus Christ.

3. The third sort are these, who build their confidence upon their duties; They think they will come to heaven by their good prayers, by their reading, and by their fasting (like unto that Pharisee, *Luk* 18. 11.) *I thank God I am not like other men; for I fast twice in the week: I pay tithes of all that I possesse.* But I say unto thee, thy duties will never bring thee to heaven, if Christ be not the end of all thy duties, nor can ye perform any duty without him.

4. The fourth sort of persons, who fall under this first rank of slighters of the Great Salvation, are those who trust on their convictions. If they have once been convinced of their sin and miserable estate, they think their is no more to do, Christ will never reject them, so they sit down and build their hope upon these convictions.

5. The fifth sort of persons are these who build their confidence upon their resolutions. Say they, oftentimes I have resolved to be a better man than I am: therefore I think (which is the fearfull delusion of many) that *God will accept the will for the deed*: But it had been good for many, such a word had not been in the Bible; or that their curious eyes had never read it. But know this, that thou

though thou had as ſtrong reſolutions as *Peter*, or as good wiſhes as *Balaam* had, if thou never labour to bring them to practice, God ſhall ſay to thee, *Depart from me, I know you not.* And of you who build upon your reſolutions, ye build upon a ſandy foundation, theſe being many times a *goodneſſe but like the morning dew.*

6. And the ſixth ſort of perſons who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of the Great Salvation (and wherein the evil is moſt ſubtill) are theſe who build their Salvation upon their graces; theſe alſo go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſſe: But I ſay to thee, Thy grace cannot be the foundation of thy hope, though they may be as evidences to ſtrengthen thy hope. Now are there none here who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of the Great Salvation; or are there none here who will confeſſe that they have gone about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſſe? I ſay to thee, who will confeſſe, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Chriſt; for he is a mercifull King: I ſay to thee, come to Chriſt with this, *All my righteouſneſs is like filthy rags*: And if thou wilt come with this in ſincerity, he ſhall ſay, *Bring forth the white robe and put it upon him*: If thou can be brought to ſpeak that in ſincerity to Chriſt, there ſhall be no more betwixt Chriſt and thee, But, *Come and cloath him with the white robe.*

II. Secondly, Theſe perſons ſlight the Great Salvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the Goſpel:

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For there are many (when we preach this Gospel, and when we hold out the Great Salvation to them) who say, *I will follow Christ: But I must first go home and bury my father*; (and so they delay to take hold of this Great Salvation) But I say to you that (who ever you be) that thus delay to take hold on this Great Salvation, ye are the slighters of it. Is there a person within these doors, who dare, but acknowledge that he hath slighted this Great Salvation, and delayed to imbrace it? O tell me? What do your consciences speak? Are there any but they must acknowledge they come under this second rank? And I say to you, who have thus delayed, will ye yet imbrace it? I say even unto you who are old men (now past sixty years, and have slighted this Great Salvation so long) yet this day this great Great Salvation is offered unto you: What say ye to it? O what do ye say to this offer? Are ye saying, I must now delay (and not receive this Great Salvation) till my Harvest be by, and over? I say unto thee, that the Harvest of the wrath of God is ripe, and he shall put in his sickle, and cut thee down. I will say no more to these who thus slight this Great Salvation, but this, *Why stand ye all the day in the Market place idle, and doing nothing*. O will ye at last be induced to take and imbrace this Great Salvation, before it be hid from your eyes.

III. Thirdly, These persons are the slighters of this Great Salvation, who complement with Christ, when they are invited

to come and partake of it: And say silently to the Minister, (or rather to their own consciences) I *pray you have me excused at this time*, as these *Luk.* 14. 18. But I would only ask at such, have ye any lawfull excuse, why ye will not come and partake of this Great Salvation? Is there any person here, that hath any lawfull excuse to present? I shall never take that off your hand, *Have me excused*: But be sure of this, I shall never excuse you, but accuse you: Therefore I desire that these persons, who have slighted the Great Salvation, by complementing with Christ, that they would complement no more with Him at all: But now imbrace it.

IV. The fourth sort of persons who slight this Great Salvation, are these who give way to discouragements and unbelief, so that they will not come and partake of this Great Salvation: I say, such of you are slighters of it, and Christ will esteem you such. Oh if ye knew the worth and vertue of this Great Salvation, there would not be a tentation (you could meet with) that would hinder you from imbracing it, but if thou could not answer these temptations, thou would not own them. I say unto such undervaluers and slighters of the Great Salvation as discouraged persons (*And these who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children*) that when ye cannot answer your objections, which hinder you from closing with Christ, I intreat you disown them, as if you heard them not: Say ye, Think ye this lawfull? I say, it is both

lawfull and expedient: for it was the practice of believing *Abraham*, *Hee considered not his own body*, being dry as an old stick, *Nor the deadneſſe of Sarahs womb.* Hee did not consider theſe things which might have been objections to keep him from believing. Hee might have ſtarted at theſe two objections: Alas, I am old, and that objection could hee not anſwer: And my wife is paſt child bearing, neither could hee anſwer that objection. What then did hee with them? Hee ſlighted them both, and conſidered them not. Secondly, I would ſay this to you, who thus ſlight it becauſe of diſcouragements: If ye did know the worth of the Great Salvation which is in this Goſpel redemption that is offered unto you, although ye had an Army of objections to go through, yee would go through them all, *To get a drink of the water of this well of Bethlehem.*

V. The fifth ſort of perſons who ſlight this Great Salvation, are theſe who will not do ſo much as take care, and give paine to hear this Great Salvation offered unto them; for there are ſome perſons who (if they come to the Church) deſire to ſit fareſt off, and ſo never take care to hear a word of this Great Salvation: And ſuch are dreadfull ſlighters of it. Like unto theſe mentioned, *Jer.* 6. 10. *To whom ſhall I ſpeak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumciſed, and they cannot hearken*, Iſa. 28. 12. *But they would not hear*, Jer. 7. 10. *Who ſay, we are delivered to do all theſe abominations:* yet they did come and ſtand before

before him, in the House which was called by his Name.

VI. Sixthly, These persons are slighters of this Great Salvation, (who when they hear it) are no more (nay not so much) affected with it, then if they were telling unto them the most senslesse history of *Thomas* the *Rymer*, or some other old fable; Like unto these mentioned, *Jer.* 6. 10. *The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it.* I would pose you all as in the sight of the Author of this Great Salvation, (men or women) did you ever set your selves (or took ye ever pains) to bring up your hearts to the love of this Great Salvation? Was it ever the rejoycing of your hearts that Christ dyed and rose again? I do certainly believe it, (and I am perswaded) that there are decrees past in Heaven against many of you. *That in hearing ye shall hear, but not understand; and in seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive*, For God hath made your hearts harder then the Flint or Adamant; so that ye shall refuse to return when he doth exhort you. Believe me, (if I may so speak) I think there is as much probability that the stones in the wall would hear (if we would speak to them) as soon as many of you.

VII. Seventhly, These persons are slighters of the Great Salvation, who did never complain that they wanted a right to this Great Salvation. I hope some of you are now convinced that ye never came within the compasse of this Great-Salvation: I say

yet

yet unto you, if ye did never ſpend one hour in ſecret weeping and lamenting, becauſe ye had not a right to this Goſpel Redemption: it is but too probable you never had yet a right to it. Yea, know it, that ſuch of you would little care to let precious Chriſt depart without any grief of heart; I think if this were voiced within this houſe to day, whether or not ſhall Chriſt go and depart, I doubt if there would be many Heart diſſenters, though many Tongue diſſenters: Oh, I fear there would be many hearts here, ſaying, O Chriſt depart and go thy way: yea, there are many *Gadarens* here, *who prefer their Swine and ſwine to precious Chriſt, and would beſeech him to go out of their coaſts.*

VIII. Eighthly, Theſe perſons ſlighe the Great-Salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Chriſt and the Goſpel. Chriſt is near to you this day: The Great ſalvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you: Therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obteſt you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him who is the Author of this Great ſalvation, that ye come and partake of it; *I obteſt you* by all the joyes of heaven that ye imbrace this Great ſalvation, *I obteſt you* by all the terrours in hell, that ye imbrace it, *I obteſt you* by the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, that ye imbrace it, *I obteſt you* by all the curſes which are written in this Book of the Covenant, that ye imbrace it, *I obteſt you* by the love ye owe to your immortal

mortall souls, that ye would once be wise, and come and partake of the Great salvation. May I now have it, saith thou? Yea, I say unto you all, ye may have it to day, ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence: And so before I proceed any further, I do in the Name and Authority of him who sent me here to day, (and is the Author of this Great Salvation) freely offer it unto you; Therefore take it off my hand, embrace this Great Salvation offered to you to day; But I know there will be eight sorts of humors (within this house to day) in relation to this Great Salvation, which now is offered unto you.

1. I think there will be some of *Gallio's* disposition here to day, that will care for none of these things; Yea, there are many here who will not give a fig for this rich offer of the Great Salvation. But, I say, cursed be that person who puts on *Gallio's* temper (to day) that will care for none of these things.

2. I fear there will be many of *Pilat's* humor here (to day) who will say, they find nothing against the man; yet will cry forth, *Take him and crucifie him.* They find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now can ye say any thing against Christ, who is the Author of this Great Salvation? Produce your strong arguments; are there any here who have any thing to say against Him? I am here to answer in His Name: I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against

againſt the Author of this Great Salvation? And why then do ye not take Him? See unto your ſelves, that there be none of *Pilats* humor here to day, that will cry out, *Yee find nothing in Chriſt why he ſhould not be received*, and yet will bee content, *that hee be crucified.*

3. There will bee many of the Jews humor here to day, who cry forth, *Away with Chriſt, away with Chriſt, and give me Barrabas.* But oh what a helliſh word is that, *Away with ſpotleſſe Chriſt, away with tranſcendent Chriſt, and give us the world?* Now are there any here who will be ſo groſs ſlighters of this Great Salvation? Will ye ſlight this Great Salvation, and imbrace your idols, which ſhall once prove a crown of thorns unto you?

4. There will bee ſome of *Felix* humor found here to day, that will ſay, *O Chriſt, go away at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient ſeaſon*; But I ſay unto you who will not hear mee to day, nor imbrace this Great Salvation, I ſhall defy all the Miniſters in *Scotland* to aſſure you, that ye ſhall get another offer, if ye ſend me away to day. There is not one that can, or dare, engage, that this Great Salvation ſhall bee in your offer any more. Therefore I ſay, let none of *Felix* temper be here to day, that will ſay, *They will hear Chriſt at a more convenient ſeaſon.*

5. There will bee ſome of *Balaams* temper (to day) who will deſire *To die the death of the righteous*, and to have their *laſt end* like his; yet they deſire not to live the life of the righteous. But I ſay unto you, ye ſhall

never die the death of the righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.

6. There will bee some of you here (to day) who (I hope) at least, will bee of *Agripa's* humour, that will say, *Thou hast almost perswaded me to be a Christian*: I say unto thee, O wilt thou quickly out with that word *almost*, and put in that word *altogether*, and say, O precious Christ, *Thou hast altogether perswaded me to be a Christian*: However, if thou come no greater length, I intreat thee come this length, that so thou may cry out, *I am almost perswaded to imbrace Christ the Great Salvation*, and may be ere long ye will come further.

7. There will bee some of *Judas* temper here (to day) *Who will betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver*; Yea, some would sell Christ, Heaven, their idols and all, for lesse then *thirty pieces of silver*.

8. I think there will be many of *Esaus* prophane temper here (to day) *Who will sell their birth-right for a messe of pottage*. Now will ye enquire at your selves, am I the person that will give *my birth-right for a messe of pottage*? Doth my heart say, *I will sell my birth-right, because I am hungered and ready to die: what will it profit me? Give mee a messe of pottage, and I will quite my birth-right*. I know it, there are not a few such here to day; Therefore I intreat you, enquire at your selves what is your humour. Oh shall the Great Salvation, that yee have slighted so long, bee slighted this day also, and shall there bee none to imbrace it? Oh inquire,

and

and ſtand in aw, leſt the wrath of the moſt High purſue you.

Now I ſhall give you theſe ſeven conſiderations, which may provoke you not to ſlight (but imbrace) this Great Salvation.

I. The firſt Conſideration, That the not imbracing of this Great Salvation is one of the greateſt acts of folly that can be, *Jer.* 8. 9. *They have rejected the word of the Lord*, (and immediatly is ſubjoyned) And, *what wiſedom is in them?* And ſo *Solomon* doth aſſure you they cannot be wiſe who neglect this Great Salvation, *Prov.* 1. 7. *Fools deſpiſe wiſedom and inſtruction*; Therefore, may not I ſay unto you, be who ye will (though ye were the greateſt heads of wit in all this place) ye are but ſtark fools as long as ye neglect this. But would ye be wiſe indeed, and wiſe unto *eternal life?* then I intreat you come and imbrace this Great Salvation.

II. The ſecond Conſideration, to provoke you not to ſlight the Great Salvation, is this, that the ruine and deſtruction of the ſlighters of it, is moſt certain and infallible, *Jer.* 11. 11. Where (ſpeaking of ſlighting the Covenant, which is indeed this ſame Great Salvation) there is a *therefore* put to the threatning: *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, I will bring evil upon them which they ſhall not be able to eſcape.* I defy you all who are the ſlighters of this Great Salvation, to finde a back door, when juſtice ſhall purſue you: For there is no door to eſcape if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation: But *the earth will diſcloſe your iniquity, and heaven will declare your ſin.*

III. Thirdly

III. Thirdly, Let this Consideration provoke you not to slight this Great Salvation, that Christ is exceeding serious, and earnest that ye would imbrace it. And I think that, *Isa.* 28. 23. speaketh out his exceeding seriousnesse: where four times hee beggeth of his hearers, that they would give ear and hear his voice (saying) *Give ear and hear my voice, hearken and hear my Speech.* What needeth all these exhortations? But that Christ is most serious, that they would imbrace the Great Salvation. And O that there were a person here (to day) as serious to the bargain as Christ is! But, be who yee will that slight this Great Salvation, (believe me) the day is coming wherein ye shall cry out, alas for my slighting of it. Wilt thou therefore think presently with thy self (O thou slighter of this Great Salvation) what wilt thou say of thy slighting of it, when the devil shall be leading thee in thorow these dark gates of hell? O slighter of the Gospel, how many alaces wilt thou cry, when thou shalt be passing thorow these dark gates into thy everlasting prison? Wilt thou not then cry out, (O me slighter of the everlasting Salvation) whither am I now going? Alas, now for my slighting the Gospel: And as thou passest thorow, thou shalt meet with numbers of miserable comforters. There is not one in that prison who can comfort thee: But many dreadfull alaces shalt thou then both cry and hear, if thou imbrace not this Great Salvation.

IV. Fourthly

IV. Fourthly, Let this provoke you no to ſlight the Great Salvation, that ye wi get it for a very look. O ye within this hou to day, ye will get this Great Salvation fo one look, *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, and b ſaved, all the ends of the earth.* For a very loo ye will get this Great ſalvation: and do y ever think to get Heaven at a lower rate?

V. The fifth Conſideration, to provok you not to ſlight this Great Salvation an more, is this, There is not one of you wh is a ſlighter of it, but your ſlighting it ſha increaſe your immortall bonds. Man or Wo man, be who thou wilt, when thou art ſlighting this Great Salvation, thou art but pla ing a cord wherewith to bind thy ſoul eter nally in theſe unquenchable flames, *Iſa.* 2 22. *Be ye not mockers, leſt your bonds be ma ſtrong*; I ſay therefore unto you, *old me* mock not, *leſt your bonds be made ſtrong*: o *women*, near unto your graves, mock not, *le your bonds be made ſtrong*: *Young men*, be y not mockers, *leſt your bonds be made ſtrong Young women*, who are in the flower of you time, mock not, *leſt your bonds be made ſtron* But now alas, will there (for all this) be perſon here to day who will be a mocker this Great Salvation?

VI. The ſixth Conſideration, to provok you not to ſlight this Great Salvation an more, is this, Ye know not but that yo dayes may be near a cloſe; I ſay, ye kno not, but the day of the preaching of this Gre Salvation may be near unto a cloſe. Wh knoweſt thou, O man or woman, but th ſh

shall be the last Sermon that ever thou shalt hear concerning this Great Salvation? And yet for all this, shall we be sent away without one consent to imbrace or receive it? O will ye be perswaded to look to Christ, and so to take him.

VII. The seventh consideration, to provoke you not to slight the Great Salvation, is this, that there is a fivefold Salvation comprehended under this Great Salvation.

1. The first is this, come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt have Salvation from thy idols: and hereby I do proclaim liberty (this day) unto captives. I am sent forth (this day) with the keyes of your prison house, to open your prison doors unto you, if ye will imbrace this Great Salvation. I say unto you, O ye *prisoners come forth and shew your selves*; for the keyes of your prison house are with us to open your prison doors unto you, therefore O come forth and embrace this Great Salvation. Will there be any (shall I think) here that will refuse to come forth, *O go forth and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage.*

II. Thou shalt have Salvation from thy darknesse, and from thy ignorance? I say unto you who understand no more of God then the stones in the wall, I command you to come forth, and partake yet of this Great Salvation; and unto you shall light arise, even the Day Spring from on high shall visit you.

III. If ye will come and partake of this Great Salvation, ye shall have deliverance from

from all your fears. Doſt thou fear that thou ſhalt be poor: Come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou ſhalt be delivered from it? Art thou afraid of hell? Come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou ſhalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid at the wrath of God? Then come (I ſay) and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou ſhalt have redemption from that and all thy fears, *With him is plenteous redemption and hee can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.*

IV. If thou wilt come and partake of this Salvation, thou ſhalt have deliverance from all thy anxieties, and from all thy cares: ye are now careſull and anxious about many things; Come and partake of this Great Salvation, and it will make you careſull but only for the *one thing neceſſary.*

V. If yee will come and embrace the Great Salvation offered unto you this day, yee ſhall be helped before yee go hence to ſing that ſong, *O death where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory?* Now O will ye come and imbrace this Great Salvation, *And yee ſhall be more then conquerours thorow Christ who loveth you.* Are there therefore any here to day that would have victory over the devil, and over their own hearts? Then come and embrace this Great Salvation, and then your victory is certain.

But now to preſſe home this Great Salvation upon you a little further, there are nine ſorts of perſons, who are invited to come and partake of this Great Salvation offered this day:

day: And I charge you answer to your names when ye are called, and delay not to come.

I. First, I invite and call here to day, all who are willing to come and embrace this Great Salvation. Now, are there any of you here to day, who are called *willing?* Then I invite you to come, and imbrace this Great Salvation, *Rev.*22. 17. *Whosoever will, let him come:* But oh, are there none here to day who are named willing? I intreat you, if there be any, do not deny your name, but come when you are called and embrace this Great Salvation.

II. Secondly, These persons who thirst for it, are invited to come, and partake of this Great Salvation, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirst, come.* Now if there be any here who are named *thirsty*, let them come and partake of this Salvation, and they shall be satisfied.

III. Thirdly, Are there any money-lesse folk here to day? Let them come and partake of this Great Salvation; Are there no money-lesse folk here to day? I mean not that money or coin in your purses, but want ye money? That is, want ye righteousnesse? Then I pray you, come and partake of this Great Salvation. I say, are ye so poor, that ye have nothing but the fear of hell? Then I say you come. If there be any here who have nothing to commend them to Christ, but necessity: I say unto all such, *O come, come, come*, and partake of this Great Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, These persons are invited to come (and I wish there were many such) who

who are *weary*: But Oh! are there none here to day, who are called *weary*? Are ye not weary in purſuit of yours? If there be any ſuch here to day, I ſay unto you, *O weary folk, come, come, come*, and partake of this Great Salvation, and of this excellent Goſpel Redemption that was purchaſed at ſo dear a rate.

V. Fifthly, Theſe who are heavy loadened are invited to come, (and I think all of you may anſwer to this name) are ye *heavy loaden*? O then come. But are there none here who are heavy loaden with ſin, with miſery, and eſtrangement from God? If there be any ſuch here, I ſay unto thee, old man, or young man, be who thou wilt, O come, and partake of this Great Salvation.

VI. Sixthly, Are there any here to day who are called blind? I ſay, if there be any of you who think ye want eyes to ſee the precious excellencies of Chriſt, I invite you to come and partake of this Great Salvation.

VII. Seventhly, Are there any who are called lame here to day? I ſay unto ſuch, *come, come, come*, and partake of this Great Salvation: For we are ſent forth to day, to call in the blind & the maimed, and the lame that they may come and imbrace this Great Salvation: Therefore are there none here to day who may be called ſuch: Are ye neither blind nor lame? I hope many of you will not deny that ye are ſuch; Therefore I ſay unto you; *O blind, halt and maimed come, come*, and partake of this Great Salvation.

VIII. The eighth ſort of perſons invited

ye these who are *sick*, therefore if there be any sick folk here to day, be who ye will, I say unto you, *O come* and partake of this Great Salvation, *For the whole need not the Physician, but the sick.*

IX. Ninthly, Are there any here to day who know not their name, or their condition, I say unto you, O nameless folk, come and partake of this Great salvation, come to Christ for the knowledge of your souls condition, come as a nameless one, and he shall not reject thee, though thy case were so evil that thou could not give it a name; for, *Of all that come unto him he sendeth none away.*

Now where do you find your name and your name? O do ye not know it? I hope now ye may know; therefore I intreat you answer to it, and so come away and partake of this Great Salvation.

But I am afraid there be many strong iron-bars in the way of some of you, which ye cannot win over. Ah, how fast are some souls locked in Satans snare; And therefore I shall speak a little for discovering of these bars, that hinder from imbracing this Great Salvation, that so ye may be the better helped to remove them.

I. The first great iron-bar which keepeth folk from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of ignorance; and I am afraid that this (as a mighty bar) hindereth many of you: Ye are ignorant of your selves, and of the condition of your souls, ye are ignorant of the Law and of its severity, and ye are ignorant of the precious Gospel in its condescendency

ſcendency. O pray unto God that for Chriſt ſake, hee would break that great bar of ignorance; for till that be done, Chriſt may take up that complaint, *Jer.* 5. 4. *Surely they are fooliſh, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God.* I ſay, this bar of ignorance keepeth you from embracing this Great Salvation.

II. The ſecond bar which keepeth many from cloſing with Chriſt, is the bar of *preſumption*, for ſome will cry out, what need have I to embrace the Great Salvation? Have I it not already? But I ſay unto thee, O fool, thou art (by all appearance) yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of preſumption were put away; for it is one of the greateſt impediments which lyeth in the way of your imbracing this Great Salvation that is in your offer to day: Therefore I ſay unto you, if you will come no further; I intreat you come this length, to confeſſe that ye want this Goſpel Salvation and that yee are indeed ſtrangers to this Redemption purchaſed by Chriſt.

III. The third bar that keepeth perſons from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of *unbelief*, yee believe not what wee ſay to you anent this Great Salvation, I know that ſome of you are of the Stoicks and Epicures humor, who cry out, *What meaneth this man? He ſeemeth to be the ſetter forth of ſome ſtrange God.* But I ſay unto you, I am not the ſetter forth of any ſtrange God, but it is Jeſus of *Nazareth* whom I preach unto you. Alas, ſome of you thinketh this Great Salvation to bee ſome morning dream, or ſome golden

golden fancy: but I say unto you, it is neither a dream nor fancy; but a real truth that we preach unto you.

IV. The fourth bar that keepeth persons from imbracing of this Great Salvation, is the bar of *discouragement*: This strong bar keepeth many so fast, that they cannot imbrace this Great Salvation though it bee freely offered unto them. I shall say no more to you, who are such, but counsell you to do as these four lepers did, 1 *King.* 7. 4. *Who sat at the gate of Samaria: who said, Why sit wee here till we die, if wee say we will enter into the City, then the famine is in the City, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.* Even so say I unto you, that if ye abide in the state of unbelief, yee shall surely bee undone; therefore go forth, for yee know not but God may work a Great Salvation for you: and if yee will quite your unbelief and close with Christ in the offer of this Great salvation (by faith) ye shal have no more to do, *but eat and drink, and divide the Spoil.*

V. The fifth bar which withholdeth persons from imbracing of this Great Salvation, is the bar of unwillingnesse, *Yee will not come to mee, that yee may have life.* And alas, that is an iron bar indeed, by which all that are in hell have barred themselves out of heaven. Alace, shall yee bee such wretches also. O what a dreadfull sound is that, *Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made*

clean? When shall it once be? Ah, *Turn you, turn you, why will ye die?* Why will ye slight this Great Salvation? O will none of you this day imbrace it!

VI. The sixth bar that withholdeth persons from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of *worldly mindednesse*: many of you are so fixed to the world, that yee cannot come and close with this Great Salvation. I may allude to that word spoken of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 10. 22. that hee *hid himself among the stuffe*: for many have buried and nested themselves in the midst of the world, that they cannot imbrace this Great Salvation.

VII. The seventh bar which keepeth many from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of *hard heartednesse*: there hath such a stupidity and hardnesse of heart seised upon many, that, let Christ preach as hee will to them (by his Word, or by other dispensations) they are no more moved, then if his Word and dispensations were a thousand miles from them. O that strong bar of hardnesse of heart, when shall the omnipotent hand of God break it?

VIII. The eighth bar that hindereth many from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of *slothfulnesse*. Many of you cannot be at the pains to imbrace it: but I say unto you, there is but small pains in the way of Godlinesse: I say unto you, it may so easily be had, that it is in your offer to day; and if ye will, ye may put forth your hand and take it. Consider therefore what yee will do. O will ye despise it! I say will ye still neglect

nd despise it (will ye but read that dread-ull word; *Act.* 13. 40. 41. *Behold ye despi-rs, and wonder and perish.* Tell me freely, ould ye have us to return this answer to im who sent us, that ye are despisers of the reat Salvation? Say to it, Are there none fyou, who (for all this) will consent to artake of this Great Salvation? O captives nd prisoners, and ye who are in the bonds of atan, will ye come and partake of this Great lvation, and you shall be made free. I have a act of release for you to day; If ye will ome, and make use of it, ye shall be set at berty. But, Oh shall the prison doors be ast open, and yet none come forth? But hat (I may come to a close) I say yet unto ou, O poor *prisoners go forth, go forth*, and artake of this Great Salvation. Oh, will e not come forth? What holdeth you in? he foundation of your prison house is aken to day, therefore if ye will but come orth and cast a look to Christ, your very akels shall fall off your hands, and ye shall e as those who were never bound. Now I ave this with you: and to make you think pon it, I shall speak these five words unto ou, and I intreat you think upon them.

1. First, I have excellent tidings to tell ou (I hope some of you will give ear to em) *viz.* There is a great Person come re to day, and that is the mighty Author this Great Salvation, who hath brought erlasting righteousnesse with him, desiring u to make use thereof; It is his desire

that yee would take his excellent Gift at hi
hand. Theſe, I ſay, are the tidings that
have to preach unto you: and I hope neve
to be declared a liar for what I preach unt
you: I ſay yet unto you, that Chriſt, th
Anthor of the Great Salvation, deſireth
give it freely unto you, if ye will but ta
it. But O will yee not take it? I think,
yee did ſee an hundreth men lying in priſo
or dungeon, without all light, bread, o
water, and a great Prince coming to them
ſaying, I deſire you all to come forth, an
partake of this Great liberty which I brin
unto you: and every one of them ſhoul
anſwer, *I ſcorn to come forth at this time*
would yee not think them exceeding grea
fools? And yet I fear this act of great foll
fall out in many of your hands to day: tha
when Chriſt hath given us the keyes of yo
priſon doors, and they are opened, yee wi
not come forth. But I muſt intreat you y
to come forth and ſhew your ſelves; F
who knoweth, but wee may bee commande
to ſhut your priſon doors again, and to ſe
them with ſeven ſeals: with an unalterab
decree from heaven, never to bee recalled
Wherefore, O ye priſoners, *go forth, go fo*
from your priſon houſe.

2. Secondly, I would ſay this to yo
that it is not without much ground th
this Salvation (offered to you) is called
Great Salvation. (I know a little Paper
two or three ſheets, might contain all t
ſalvations that ever any man obtained: b
the world would not bee able to contain

the Books which might be written to the commendation of this Great Salvation; yea, (unto any who will imbrace it) I say, First, If thou finde not this Salvation above thy faith, then go thy way when thou art come; But I know thou wilt finde it both above thy faith and hope. Secondly, If thou finde it not above thy desires when thou art come unto it, then go thy way again: but were thy desires as the sand upon the sea shoare, thou shalt alwayes finde more in this Salvation then ever thou could desire. Thirdly, If this Salvation be not above what thou can conceive, then go thy way when thou art come to it; But think of it as thou can, it shall alwayes be above thy thoughts of it: Fourthly, If this Salvation be not above thy opinion of it, then go thy way when thou art come unto it: but I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore seeing it is so Great a Salvation, as that all the world could not contain all the Books might be written in the commendation of it. O will ye imbrace it, even to day, while it is in your offer.

3. Thirdly, I would say this unto you, be perswaded, that there is no sin that will more provoke the Majesty of God to punish you, then the sin of slighting the Great-Salvation. *Bring forth these murtherers* saith the Lord (of the slighters of this invitation) *and slay them before me.* I intreat you enquire at your own hearts, what ye will answer when ye are reproved for slighting of it (Old men, will ye ask at your

own hearts, what ye will answer to Christ when he shall propose that question to you, Why slighted ye the Great Salvation? O woman, what will ye answer, when he shall say to you, why slighted ye the Great Salvation? Young men, and young women, inquire at your own hearts what ye will answer when Christ shall say to you, why slighted ye the great Salvation? Can ye imagine any answer unto that question? O dreadfull shall the wrath of God be, that shall be executed upon the slighters of this Great Salvation?

4. Fourthly, I would say this unto you that heaven is waiting to hear, what acceptation the offer of this Great Salvation doth get among you. Here is the Great Salvation, here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it; what say ye to it? is it not an excellent Salvation? Is it not a free Salvation? Is it not a Great Salvation? Is it not an eternal Salvation? Why then do ye not welcome it? Can any of you say any thing to the discommendation of it? I know you cannot? Yea I dar say your own hearts are admiring it as most excellent; And therefore O will ye accept it. Alas shal there be none here who will be found accepters of this Great Salvation, so freely offered to day?

5. Fifthly, I would say this to you, let the Angels praise him who the Author of this Great Salvation. All the Saints round about the Throne praise him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. All these who are expectants of heaven praise Him who is the Author of this Great Salvation; All ye

to whom this offer is made, praiſe him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. O heaven praiſe him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, O all ye fowls of the air, praiſe him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, *O fire, hail, ſnow, vapors, ſtormy winds* and *tempeſts*, praiſe Him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. All the tribes of the earth, praiſe him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. Our own ſoul praiſe him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, and all that is within us bleſſe him who is the Author of this Great Salvation. O who would not praiſe Him, who is the Author of this Great Salvation? Are there any here that will refuſe to commend him? O think upon him, and let not this be a day of ſlighting him? Now where are your hearts at this time? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the world: but I am ſure there are not many of them thinking upon this Great Salvation. Now what reſolution mind ye to go away with to day? Oh, have ye no reſolution beyond what ye had when ye came hither to day? Are there any here who have this reſolution, *To whom ſhall we go, but to him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, who alone hath the words of eternal life?* Even the Lord breath it upon you. Or is this your reſolution, that through Chriſts ſtrength (*forſake him who will*) *ye will never forſake him*? Or, have ye this reſolution, That *ye will eſteem more highly of the* Great Salvation *then ever ye did?* O that *the Lord may keep*

these in the imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts for ever. But as for you who have no resolutions to imbrace this Great Salvation, O wherewith shall I commend it unto you? Do not your own necessities commend it? But if nothing can perswade you to come away and imbrace it, then this place shall be a heap of witnesses against you: *For it hath heard all the words of the Law which he hath spoken unto you*, Josh. 24.

Oh cast your eyes upon these pillars of the house, and stones in the walls: I take them as so many witnesses, that they may speak, and testifie against you in the great day of the Lord, if ye neglect this Great Salvation to day. Therefore as ye go away, be thinking upon it, and whether or not ye minde to imbrace it, now while you may have it. This day I have set life and death before you: I have set before you both the Great Salvation and the great damnation; And O that ye had understanding in all these things; that ye being wise might be provocked at last to imbrace this Great Salvation, the which we do yet again intreat you to think upon. Is not heaven looking upon you at this time, to see what ye will do with this great offer of Salvation which I have this day (from the Lord) presented unto you? Now, to Him, that can perswade you to imbrace this Great Salvation, this Gospel Redemption, this blessed mystery into which the Angels desire to pry, to Him, *Who can bring you back from the pit; and can enlighten you with the light of the living?* To Him who hath the

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keyes of your prison, *Who can open and none can shut, and can shut and none can open*; To Him, *who hath all power in Heaven and in Earth communicate to Him, who can deliver you from the power of the Grave, and can set you free from all your enemies*, wee desire to give praise, Amen.

SERMON II.

Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THere are two great and most ordinary complaints in these dayes. 1. There are many who complain, that their Estates and Persons are in bondage, and that they are sold for slaves to the hands of strangers: But, O that wee could also turn over the complaint to this, that our souls are in bondage, and that we are yet in *the gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of iniquity*, that so we might be provoked to long for the Great Salvation that is in our offer. 2. There are many complaining (and not without much cause) that there is now such a tolleration of Errours: But, O will thou complain also of this, that within thy heart there is a tol-

leration of luſts; is there not an act of tolderation concluded within thy breaſt, that the devil and all his company may reign in thee at pleaſure: Oh have ye not need of Great Salvation; Shall I tell you, that Chriſt is courting you to imbrace it, and that he putteth on all his moſt glorious robes, and manifeſteth himſelf unto you, as a ſuiter making offer of himſelf and of his Great Salvation. O tell me, have ye ſeen him? Or do ye think to ſee him this day? What robes had he on. There are five glorious Robes wherewith he cloaths himſelf when he condeſcendeth to manifeſt himſelf to his people. Firſt, He cometh to his own with the *garments of Salvation*, according to that word, Zech. 9. verſe. 9. *Rejoyce, O daughter of Sion greatly, ſhout O daughter of Jeruſalem; for behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is juſt and having Salvation*; ay, your King is come here to day, and will you not fall in love with him when he is cloathed with the garments of Salvation, can ye ever have a more conquering ſight of Chriſt, then when he is cloathed with ſuch an excellent Robe, and offering you Salvation. Secondly, He appeareth to his own ſometimes *in garmenes dyed in bloed*, according to that word, *Iſa.* 63. *verſe* 1, 2. *Who is this that cometh up from Edom with dyed garments in bloud, as one that treadeth the wine fat*: And now I ſay to thee that will not look to Chriſt when he appears in the garments of Salvation, have ye a heart to refuſe him, that have fought ſuch a combate for you, who *hath trode the wine-*

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preſſe alone, and hath ſtained all His garments with the bloud of his enemies; or is there any here who dare refuſe this Salvation, when they ſee how *he treadeth his enemies in anger, and trampleth them in his fury*, and thus *ſprinkleth their bloud upon his garments*. O tremble at this ſight, and ſeek quarter from him in time, or he ſhall dy his garments with the blood of thy immortall ſoul. Thirdly, Chriſt appeareth unto his own, being cloathed with theſe humble Robes of condeſcendency, when he came in *the ſimilitude of ſinfull fleſh*: O what a ſight was that; to behold the Prince of Heaven cloathed with our *nature*; What a ſight was that to behold him that was *cloathed with light as with a garment*, to be cloathed with *our infirmities*, yet he condeſcended to cloath himſelf thus, that we might have acceſſe unto Him, and be partakers of His gifts: O can we refuſe Him, when love hath thus preſſed him to put on the beggar weed, that *he might ſay to worms ye are my brethren, and my ſiſters*. Fourthly, Chriſt ſomtimes manifeſteth Himſelf, being cloathed with the garments of beauty, and raviſhing Majeſty; ſuch was the ſight that the Spouſe got of Chriſt, *Song. 2. verſ. 8. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, ſo is my beloved among the ſons*; and *Song. 5.* when ſhe ſaw him, *White and ruddy, and the ſtandard bearer of ten thouſand*, and ſuch was that joyfull ſight of Him, when his garments were as the light, *and white as the ſnow* which he had at the Transfiguration, when theſe glorified ones did come (as it were) Ambaſſadors from

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that higher house to make him a visit. And, fifthly, Christ he sometimes appeareth to his own, in Robes of dreadfull Majesty, and terrible highnesse and loftinesse, when the soul upon the first sight of him remains dead, and there remains no more life in them; Such was the sight *Daniel* got, in his 10. Chapter, and such was the sight that *John* got of Christ, *Rev.* 1 *verse.* 17. And I would ask at all that are here, what a sight have ye gotten of Christ to day, in which of all these robes have ye seen Him in: It is true, we are not now to look for the extraordinary sights of Him; But yet if ever thou hast seen him in any of his wooing Robes, sure he hath appeared matchlesse, and how shall ye then refuse him.

But now to come to the words I was speaking unto you of; The first thing in the words, to wit, That there are many who live under the offer of this Great Salvation that do slight it, and do not imbrace it; And now I shall only add a few things further unto you. 1. Let me propose a few Considerations to perswade you to imbrace the Great Salvation: God forbid we go a way before we imbrace this Gospel Salvation: And therefore, I charge you in his Name, go not away before ye imbrace it. And to presse it home upon you, there are these eight or nine properties of this Great Salvation, that is offered unto you this day.

And first, It is a *free Salvation*, ye have no more a do, but to put forth your hand and take it: O come and take it: Christ hath

hath fought for this Salvation, and there is no more required of you, but to come and reap the fruits of his victory; *Who ever will let him come*, there is nothing that should move you to stay away, *O captives bond slaves to Satan, O prisoners of hope*, will yee come and partake of the Great Salvation, what holds you from coming away and partaking of it, it is freely offered unto you: ay, believe it, Christ requires no more of you, but that ye should come and take it out of his hand; *If yee consent to obey*, the bargain is ended; *Yee shall eat the good of the land*, Isa. 1.

Secondly, This Great Salvation, is a compleat Salvation, that is offered unto you today, this is clear, *Luk.* 1. *vers.* 17. *That we might bee saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us*, there is not any enemy that is in thy way, but if thou will come and partake of the Great Salvation, thou may have victory over it, so compleat a Salvation is it that is in your offer this day. O shall wee passe away, and not imbrace it: O shall our cursed hearts undervalue this compleat Salvation that is come to your door, believe it, *Salvation is near unto you*, if yee will take it.

Thirdly, It is a *wonderfull Salvation*, it is such a Salvation as the Angels desireth to pry into it, and it is such a Salvation, that all the Prophets desire to pry into it; it is almost six thousand years since all the Angels in heaven fell into a Sea of wonder at this Great Salvation; It is almost six thou-

thousand years since *Abel* fell into a Sea of wonder at this Great Salvation: And what think ye is his exercise this day? He is even wondering at this Great salvation: Would ye ask at all the Angels in heaven, would they not all say, O imbrace the Great Salvation; Would ye ask at all the Saints that are above, would they not advise you to imbrace the Great Salvation: Would ye ask at *Adam*, would he not say, *O imbrace this Great Salvation*: Could ye ask at *Abel*, would he not say, *O imbrace this Great Salvation*: And would not all the Patriarchs say unto you, *O imbrace the Great Salvation*: And do not all that have tasted of the sweetnesse of it, cry out unto you, *Come and imbrace the Great Salvation.*

The fourth property of His salvation is, that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate; it is a dear Salvation. Would ye know the difference between Christs coming to this Salvation, and your coming to it, it is this: Christ was forced to travell through all the armies of the Justice of God; He was forced to drink of the cup of the warth of God, before he could come to purchase this Great Salvation; and now what is required of you to obtain this, we may say no more, but put out your hands and take it; will ye look to the price that was laid down for this Salvation, there is not a wound in the body of Christ, but it saith, *This is a dear Salvation*: There is not a reproach Christ met with but it saith, *O is not this a dear Salvation*: There is not a buffeting Christ met with, but it sai

O is not this a dear Salvation: There is not a neceſſity that he is put into, but it ſaith, *Is not this a great and dear Salvation.* O Sirs, will ye not come and take this Great Salvation, this dear Salvation. What muſt I give for it ſay ye, I ſay, ye muſt give nothing for it, come and take it *without money, and without price*; it was dear to Chriſt, but it ſhall be cheap unto you, O! is it not cheap to you, I aſſure you, if you will come to the market to buy the Great Salvation, there is none of you that needeth to ſtand for the price of it. O come and take it, and have it, and there ſhall be no more priging.

Fifthly, It is an everlaſting Salvation, that ye ſhall enjoy the fruits of throughout eternity, as is clear, *Heb* 9. 13. *He became the author of eternal redemption unto us*, it is a Salvation that the devil can never be able to take out of your hand, if ye take it, ye ſhall never be robbed of it again. O come and partake of this Great Salvation, whereby the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt you.

Sixthly, It is an noble and honourable Salvation, it is not to be taken out of one ſlavery to another, but it is to be taken *out of priſon that we may raign*: Luk. 1. verſe 71. compared with verſ. 74. it is, *That we being ſaved, may ſerve him without fear in holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, all the dayes of our life.* I ſay, Come, come, and partake of this Great Salvation, that your glory may be increaſed, and that ye may be exalted above the Kings of the earth.

Seventhly, It is a moſt advantagious Salvation:

on: What are the advantages of any Salvation that are not to be found in this: is there not peace to be found through this Salvation, is there not liberty to be found through this Salvation, is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this Salvation; yea, all Salvations are in this one Salvation.

Lastly, It is a royal Salvation, for it cometh to us from and through the Son of God: Christ is the Author of it, and we conceive, Christ may be said to be the Author of this Salvation, in these respects, 1. He is the meritorious cause that did procure it, it was the price of his bloud that was laid down for to purchase this Great Salvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence it floweth, according to that word which we have cited. *Heb.* 5. 9. *He became the Author of eternal Salvation.* 3. He is the person that fitteth our spirits for partaking of it, and it is he that removeth mountains out of the way, that we may have fair accesse unto the Great Salvation. 4. It is he that must perswade our hearts to imbrace and take hold of it. He standeth without, and cryeth in to the heart, to imbrace the Great Salvation; And he standeth within, making thy heart cry out, *Content*, I will imbrace the Great Salvation; He is indeed the person that commendeth, and doth point forth this Great Salvation unto us, He is the noble Minister of it, it began first to be preached by him.

Now, Is there any of you that have fallen in love with the Great Salvation: that ye

ye may try your ſelves, I ſhall give you ſome evidences of the perſons that are near unto this Great Salvation. 1. Is thy *eſtimation* of the Great Salvation increaſed, be what it was in the morning when thou came hither; Is thy eſtimation of the great Goſpel Salvation a foot higher then it was in the morning, I ſay unto thee, thou are not far from the Great Salvation, Come away. 2. Is thy deſire after the Great Salvation increaſed be what it was in the morning; Hath thou ſtronger deſires after the Great Salvation, then before thou came hither, that is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. Is *thy thoughts of thy neceſſity* of the Great Salvation greater then they were? Thinkeſt thou that thou haſt more need of the Great Salvation then ever thou thoughteſt before: And is thy opinion and thoughts of ſaving thy ſelf, leſſe then they were before thou cameſt hither? Art thou forced to cry out, *none but Chriſt* can ſave me? I ſay thou art not far from the Great Salvation: Will thou come away. O that ye would once ſeal this concluſion with much heart perſwaſion, *I am undone without Chriſt*, *I am undone without Chriſt*, who is the Author of the Great Salvation. Are there any of you that are ſenſible that ye are in the fetters of ſin, and in the bonds of iniquity? Are ye brought to the conviction of this, that ye are yet in the gall of bitterneſſe? I ſay, if thou be brought to this length, to be ſenſible of thy bonds, and art crying out, *O Redeemer, haſten and come*

come away; I say, If thou be sensible of thy bonds and imprisonment, and crying out, *O thou that was anointed from eternity, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*, O hasten and come away and redeem me, *even poor me*, sinking, sinning, perishing, self destroying *me*, thou art not far from the Great Salvation.

4. Art thou a person who beginneth to weep because thou hast been so long a stanger to Christ, and the Great Salvation: Old men, that are here, how long have ye been strangers to the Great Salvation, and to the Author of it? Now will ye shed one tear for your estrangement, and cry out, Wo is me that Christ and I have been so long asunder; I say, if thou hast come that length, thou art not far from the Great Salvation, *Come away*: O pity your selves, make hast, make hast, and *come away*.

But now in the third place, let me give you some evidences by which ye may know more clearly, whither or no ye have imbraced *this Great Salvation*, that ye may know your selves, and that ye walk not down to your grave with a lie in your right hand. The first evidence of a person that hath imbraced the Great Salvation, is, that he will have a high esteem of the Saviour and Author of the Great Salvation: Hast thou a matchlesse esteem of matchlesse Christ the Saviour of the world, that is a speaking evidence unto thee, thou art a partaker of the Great Salvation: Art thou come this length that thou cryeth out, *none but Christ*, *non*

but Christ: It is a speaking evidence, that thou art come to be a partaker of the Great Salvation, when thou can cry out that word, *Exod.* 15. 2. *The Lord is my strength and my song, he alone is become my salvation*: if Christ hath become thy Salvation, then it is like he hath become thy Song. I would ask this at you, Were ye ever brought this length, that ye durst not adventure to praise Christ your alone, but was forced to call in all the creatures, and say, *O magnifie the Lord with me?* O that is an evidence that ye have imbraced his Salvation.

Secondly, These who have imbraced the Great Salvation, will study to maintain and keep their grips of it: they will study to hold fast so precious a Jewel; this is prest, *Gal.* 5. *ver.* 1. *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; yea they will study to walk suitably to this noble mercy, at least, they will strive and endeavour to do it, as is also prest, in that same verse. I say, if thou hast been made a partaker of the Gospel of Salvation, thou wilt strive to keep thy self from the power of these things that once triumphed over thee.

Thirdly, A person that is a partaker of the Great Salvation, will have a high esteem of this mercy and Salvation; so *Paul*, when he speaketh of it here, he cannot but put some note of excellency to it, calling it *the Great Salvation*; Therefore, I say, if thou hast imbraced the Great Salvation, thou wilt have so high esteem of it, that not to be so subjected to it as thou should: or to be

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in ſubjection to the power of thy luſt in any meaſure, will be his burden and affliction. The man will be ſorry when he is brought forth from the houſe of his bondage, unto the Red ſea; he will be ſorry, that when he ſhould have ſongs of triumph over his idols put in his mouth, that they ſhould ſing ſongs of triumph over him.

Fourthly, A perſon that hath imbraced the Great Salvation, he will be longing ſometimes for the day when this Salvation ſhall be compleat, when he ſhall ſing that ſong with that *numerous multitude which cannot be numbered*, Rev. 7 verſ 9. O what a day ſhall it be, when thou ſhall begin to ſing that ſong! After this, (ſaith he) *I beheld, and lo, a great multitude of all people which no man could number, of all people, nations and languages ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and they cried*; And how cryed they? *They cryed with a loud voice*: They would not mutter the ſong, nor ſing ſilently, but *cryed with a loud voice*: And what did they cry? They cryed with a loud voice, *Salvation unto our God, who ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.* I would onely aſk at you that are partakers of the Great Salvation, what ſongs ſhall be put into thy mouth, when the waters of *Jordan* ſhall divide themſelves, *that the ranſomed of the Lord muſt paſſe thorow*: when thou ſhalt ſing that ſong, *Pſal* 115. *ver.* 1. *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee belongs the glory of our ſalvation*: O what a day ſhall that be, when that excellent ſong

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ſhall be put in thy mouth; yea, what a day ſhall it be, when thou ſhalt bee cloathed with theſe excellent garments that are made mention of *Iſa. 6. ver.* 10. for hee hath cloathed thee with the *garments of Salvation*, and hee hath covered thee with the *robe of righteouſneſſe*: O what robes are theſe? Did yee ever ſee ſuch excellent robes as theſe muſt bee? I think wee will miſken our ſelves; O do yee not think wee will miſken our ſelves, when wee ſhall put on theſe excellent robes? Now therefore, is the bargain cloſed: Or will yee go away before yee take this Great Salvation? Dare yee go out at theſe doors, and neglect the Great Salvation? I would aſk this at you, Think yee it will not be moſt ſad, that Chriſt ſhould tell this in heaven of you to night, I was preached to a pack of ſtones, that none of them would love me: Will yee not bee feared that this report ſhall be carried back to heaven of you? For what report can Chriſt carry back but this? Now is the cord of this Great Salvation let down unto you: Is there none of you that will take a grip of it? O will ye fliſhter after it! Will yee make this a rejoycing day in heaven, that is a faſting day unto you, and the way to make it ſo, is to imbrace the Great Salvation. Now what ſay yee to it old men, let mee ſpeak to you, and aſk your thoughts of the Great Salvation, gray hairs ſhould bee a Crown of Glory, if it bee found in the way of Righteouſneſſe, old men ſpeak your minds, that young men may not have your bad example;

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What say ye of this Salvation? Is it not a moſt glorious Salvation, is it not a moſt excellent Salvation that is in your offer; I intreat you ſpeak your minds, tell Chriſt ye are content to take the Great Salvation; otherwiſe, who ever he be that will not partake of this Goſpel Salvation; I in the Name and Authority of Chriſt our Maſter, denounce eternal and irrevockable war againſt him; put on your harneſſe, ye ſhall not boaſt when you put it off again, the wrath and fury of God ſhall come upon thee to the uttermoſt if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation. Other Wars are but for a time; the greateſt Captains that ever the earth did carry, are now *laid down in the ſides of the pit, and their ſwords broken under their heads.* Armies of ten hundreth thouſand, a hundreth years time have laid them all in their graves, and ended all their conteſts, but there is no diſcharge of his war that ſhall be concluded betwixt Chriſt and you, it ſhall become an eternal and moſt terrible War, which ſhall be but beginning when time is ended: Now Peace or War, which of them will ye chooſe? Dare ye ſend a charge to Chriſt, and ſay ye will defy him? I am afraid there ſhall be two things that many of us ſhall report to day. Firſt, I am afraid there will be many that will give *Pharaohs* report to the offer of the Great Salvation, and ſay, *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him?* I tell you who he is, He is *glorious in Holineſſe, fearfull in Praiſes, doing wonders*; O imbrace him before he go hence, and give not *Pharaohs* report,

port, leſt yee bee drowned in the ſea of His wrath, whence there ſhall be no recovery.

Secondly, I fear there will be many here to day, that will give *Demas* report to this precious offer; I will go and forſake Chriſt; and imbrace this preſent world: O bad exchange; curſed be he that ſhall make it, will ye be of *Demas* humor; I fear there hath been many of that humor of a long time; but I intreat you once be wiſe before you die. I confeſſe that proverb, old fools, are twice fools: I think old men that will not imbrace the Great Salvation, I think ye are triple fools; What wait ye for, is there any thing can afford you any ſatisfaction but this Great Salvation. Now are ye convinced old men, that Chriſt is waiting for your anſwer; I intreat you before ye go hence, ſpeak your minds, what ye think of the Great Salvation; is it not a lovely Salvation, Is it not lovely now? What ſay ye to it; I am to go away, and the offer is to be taken up at this time, and it is hard to ſay, if ever ye ſhall have an offer again. I would only ſay this to you, and be ſure of it, though I ſhould never be a partaker of this Great Salvation, yet I ſhall be a witneſſe againſt you that are not partakers of it: I tell and declare unto you, I ſhall be a witneſſe againſt you if ye imbrace not the Great Salvation. Now, old men are ye perſwaded to imbrace it? Let me obreſt you *by the beauty of Chriſt*, come and partake of the Great Salvation, ye that are travelling upon the borders of eternity. Now, if ye will give no more, give this,

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will ye go home and think upon it. I shall not bee uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts; I fear there shall bee many declared and found guilty among us, that we have declared unto heaven wee will not imbrace the Great Salvation, but have trod the bloud of the *Son of God under foot*. Now I intreat you, every one of you, ask at your selves if yee be the persons that will *presume in your hearts to do so*. Now I shall leave it with you, let it not bee a witnesse against you. I shall leave it with this: O come away, Old men, Young men, Old women and Maids, come and imbrace this precious Gospel Salvation. Yee may say, Ye bid us come: but we cannot come. I desire no more of you but to come with this: Lord, I am content to come, but I cannot come. Come once to that: for if once yee bee content to receive it, it will not bee long befor yee bee able to receive it. Now shall Christ depart, and will none of you say, yee are content to take him? Will yee charge your own Consciences with this: Am I content to take Christ and the Great Salvation? O blest, blest, blest bee He that is the Author of this Great Salvation; and blest be hee that gets any of the ends of the cord of the Great Salvation, that we sink not under the wrath and fury of the Lord. Come and imbrace this Great Salvation: and again I say, come and imbrace it; for what can yee have if yee want it? and what can yee want if yee have it? I shall say no more but close with that word, *Isa. 62. vers. 11. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the end*

of the world, to those that are far off; What hath hee proclaimed? *Say yee to the daughter of Sion, behold thy Salvation cometh, behold it cometh.* I say to you that are the ends of the world, Salvation is brought near unto you: *Stout hearted and far from righteousnesse*, the Great Salvation is brought near unto you, and will you send it away? O consider what ye are doing: And to him that can perswade you to imbrace the Great Salvation, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON Concerning DEATH.

Psal. 89. 48. *What man (is he that) liveth and shall not see death, &c.*

IT is very hard to determine, where all that are here shall be within thirty years: for even ere that time come, many (if not all) of us who are here shall have taken up our eternall lodging. And whether we shall take it up in the eter-

nity of joy, or the eternity of pain, is also hard to determine: onely this one thing I am sure of, that all of us shall shortly bee gone; *And ere long the shadows of death shall bee sitting upon our eye lids, and our eye strings shall begin to break*, Therefore I would the more seriously inquire at you; what would ye think if death were approaching this night unto you? Think yee that Jesus Christ is gone up to prepare a place for you? even for you? Surely I think wee are all near to eternity; and there are some hearing mee to day, whom I defy the whole world to assure, that ever they shall hear another Sermon: Therefore, I intreat you all to hear this preaching, as if it were the last preaching that ever yee should hear; and O that wee could speak it as if were the last Sermon that ever wee would preach unto you. Believe me, death is another thing then we take it to bee: *Oh what will many of us do in the day of our visitation: when desolation shall come from a far; where will we flee for rest, and where will we leave our glory?* Old rich men, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Old poor men, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Old women, where will yee flee when death assaults you? Young women, where will yee flee when death assaults you? It was an ancient observation of *David*, Psal. 39. 5. that *God had made his dayes as an hand breadth*; which either may relate to the four fold estate of man, *viz.* his *infancy*, his *child-hood*, his *man-hood*, and his

old age: O it may relate to the four-fold time of his life, *viz.* his morning, his forenoon, his afternoon, and his evening, yet all our lifetime is but a day. And O think ye not that our day is near unto a close?

Now before that I begin to speak any thing from the words; I shall speak a few things to these two questions; which I conceive, may not altogether be unprofitable.

Quest. 1. Whether is it lawfull for any to desire to die and to return unto their long and endlesse home? whether it be lawfull for one to cry out, *O time, time, flee away (and all my shadows let them be gone)* that so long eternity may come?

Answ. I say, it is lawfull in some cases for one to desire to die: for it was *Pauls* desire, *Philip.* 1. 23. *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better.* And 2 Cor. 5. 2. *We groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed with our house which is from heaven.* I long greatly till the twentieth one year of my age come, when my minority shall be overpast, that I may be entered heir to that matchlesse inheritance. But to clear in what cases it is lawfull to desire to die.

1. I say, it is lawfull to desire to die, when it floweth from a desire of uninterrupted fellowship and communion with Christ, and conjunction with him: this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5, 6. *Knowing that while we*

are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Therefore vers. 8. *We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* Also it is clear, Philip. 1. 23. *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far bettter.* It was his great end to have near and unmixed communion with Christ. What aileth you *Paul* (might one have said) may ye not be content to stay a while here? Nay, saith *Paul, I desire to be gone, and to be with Christ;* Wast thou never with him here *Paul?* I have been with him, saith he, but what is all my being with him here, in comparison of my being with him above? *While I am present in the body, I am but absent from the Lord.* Therefore I will never be at rest (saith he) get what I will, untill I get Christ; untill I get these naked and immediate imbracements of that noble Plant of renown, the flour of the stalk of *Jesse*, who is the light of the higher house, the eternal admiration of Angels?

II. It is lawfull to desire to die when it floweth from the excellencies of heaven, and from a desire to partake of these excellent things that are there, this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *We groan being burdened*, or as the word is, *We groan, as they who are prest under a heavy burden, that we may be cloathed upon, &c.* What aileth you to groan so *Paul?* O saith he, I groan that *mortality may be swallowed up of life.*

III. I

III. It is lawfull to desire to die, when it floweth from a desire to be freed from the body of death: and from these tentations that assault us; and from these oppressions whereunto we are subject by it. Doubtlesse, *Paul* desired to die on this account, when he cryed out, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He longeth greatly for the day, *Wherein hee should be made white like the wings of a dove, covered with silver, whose feathers are of yellow gold.* O saith *Paul*, I am as one impatient till I be above, where I shall be cloathed with these excellent and cleanly robes, *The righteousnesse of Christ.* Oh, saith *Paul*, I think every day as a year, till I be possessed of that Kingdom where Sathan cannot tempt, and the creature cannot yeeld, and where I shall be free from all my fears of sinning. Now in all these respects, who would not desire to die? But to guard all these, I would give you these four Cautions.

1. *Caution.* Your desires to die should not be peremptory, but yee should desire to die with submission to the will of God, so that although he would fill up fifteen years more to your life, yee should be content to live it out.

2. *Caution.* When your desires are hasty, and off hand, suspect them; for some when they meet with an outward crosse (without all deliberation) will cry out, *O to be gone, O that I were dead.* But your desires

to die, should be deliberate, but not hasty, or rash.

3. *Caution.* It is not lawful to desire to die, because of personal affliction. Many, when they meet with bitter afflictions, will cry out, *O to be gone*: They long for death, even upon that account, such were *Jobs* desires, *Job* 20. 21, 22. and chap. 6. ver. 7. 8. *O that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me, &c.* This desire was very unlawfull.

4. *Caution.* It is not lawfull to desire to die, when thy predominant idol is taken away from thee; yet such was *Jonahs* desire, *chap.* 4. 23. *Jonah* thought his credit and reputation (which was his idol) was gone, and could never be regained: therefore he wished to die. But I would say this to you, that some will have ten desires for death, when they have not one desire for heaven. And what moveth Christians to be so desirous to die? It is not so much because of their hope, as because of their anxiety; it is not so much because of their confidence, as because of their impatience. But I say unto you, when your desires of death are not accompanied with desires of heaven, suspect them. 2. I would say this, that there are some who will have ten desires for death, when they will not have one for the death of the body of death; But it were good for thee (who are such) to be desiring the death of the body of death, then should thou be in a more suitable frame to desire to die.

3 Some

3. Some will have hearty desires to die, and yet when death cometh, they will be as unwilling to die as any. It hath been observed, that some who have much desired to die, when death came, have cryed out, *O spare a little that I may recover strength*, &c. 4. There is a great difference between a desire to die, and death it self. It is an easie thing to desire to die, but it is a very great business to meet with death, and to look it in the face, when it cometh. We think death (ere it come near to us) to be but childrens play, but when we meet with it, it maketh us change our thoughts. For it is a great businesse to die.

Quest. 2. Is it lawfull for a Christian to desire to live, when he is summoned to die?

Answ. In some cases it is lawfull for a Christian to desire to live, even when he is summoned to die; which is clear from the practice of *David*, Psal. 39. 13. where he prayeth, *That the Lord would spare him a little.* It is also clear from the practice of good *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 3. when he was commanded *to set his house in order, for he should die, and not live*, he cryeth forth, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart: and have done that which is good in thy sight*, and Hezekiah *wept sore*; Or as the word in the Original, *he wept with great weeping*: But to guard this, take these two *Cautions*.

Caution 1. Thy desires to live (when thou are summoned to die) should not be peremp-

tory, but with ſubmiſſion to the will of God, that if it bee his pleaſure to remove thee preſently out of time, thou ſhould bee content to die.

Caution 2. Thy deſires to live ſhould have gracious principles, and alſo a very gracious end, as is moſt clear from *David*, Pſal. 39. 13. where hee ſaith, *O ſpare a little that I may recover my ſtrength, before I go from hence and bee no more*: his deſire to live was that hee might have more victory over his Idols, as if hee had ſaid, my deſire to live is, that I may have ſtrength to wreſtle with, and overcome my Idols: and without all controverſie, *Hezekiahs* deſire was a moſt precious and well grounded deſire: However, I would ſay this unto thee, that thou ſhouldeſt examine thy deſires to live, as much (if not more) as thy deſires to die: for wee are ready to ſhun death if wee could, but hee is that univerſall King, unto whom all of us muſt be ſubject ere long.

Now in the words which are read unto you, there are theſe ſix things which may be clearly obſerved from them.

I. Firſt, That it is a moſt clear and infallible truth, that all perſons ſhall once ſee death: as is clear in theſe words, *Who is hee that liveth and ſhall not ſee death.*

II. Secondly, That this truth (that wee ſhall once ſee death) is not much believed or thought upon by many, therefore it is that the Pſalmiſt doubleth the Aſſertion. *Who is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death?*

ſhall

Shall he deliver his soul (that is his life) *from the hand* (that is) *from the power of the grave.*

III. Thirdly, That sometimes a Christian may win to the solide Faith of this truth, that once he must die, this the Psalmist wan unto, as it is also clear in that word (who) *Who is he that liveth and shall not see death?*

IV. Fourthly, That the certainty of this, that once we shall die should be still keeped in our minde, therefore that note of attention *Selah*, is put to it; as if he had said, take heed that there is none living that shall not die.

V. Fifthly, That howbeit some persons put the evil day far away, as if they were not to see death, yet is the day coming when they shall see death, and death shall take them by the hand.

VI. Sixthly, We shall take notice of this from the context, that the Christian who is much in minding the brevity of his life, will believe the certainty of his death, the Psalmist was speaking of the shortnesse of his life in the preceeding verse, and in this verse, he speaketh of the certainty of death.

Now as for the first of these things observed, *viz.* That it is certain and most sure that we must all once die; I hope there are none of you here who will deny it; although I confesse few of you beleeveth it, yet said the woman of *Tekoah*, 2 *Sam.*

14. *We must all die and be like water spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again*, &c. *God doth not accept the person of any*, and *Job* 30. 32. *I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* And it is very clear, *Eccles.* 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the Spirit, neither hath he any power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that War; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it*: It is also clear, *Heb.* 9. 27. *It is appointed unto all men once to die.* So it is most clear that we must die. I remember of one *Philip* King of *Macedonia*, who had one substitute for this very end, to cry at his Chamber door every morning, *Memento mori*, *Memento mori*, *Memento mori*, Remember thou art to die, and it is reported to have been the practice of the Nobles of *Greece*, and in the day wherein their Emperour was Crowned, that they presented a *Marble stone* unto him, and he was inquired after what fashion he would have his *Tomb stone* made: which practices speak forth this unto us, that although these were most destitute of light of the Scriptures, yet were very mindfull of death. Believe me, death may surprise us before we be aware, for it is most certain that we must die, but there is nothing more uncertain then the way how, and the time when we shall die.

Death will surprise some, as it did *Abel*, in the open field, *Gen.* 4. 8, Death will surprise

priſe ſome, as it did *Eglon* in his parlour, *Judg.* 3. 21. And death will ſurpriſe ſome, as it did *Saul* and *Jonathan* in the flight, 1 *Sam.* 31.

Now in ſpeaking to this point, I ſhall firſt ſpeak a little to theſe advantages which attend thoſe that live within continuall ſight of death. Secondly, I ſhall give you ſome Conſiderations to preſſe you to prepare for death. Thirdly, I ſhall give you ſome Directions to help you to prepare for Death: And then we ſhall proceed unto the ſecond point of doctrine which we obſerved from the Text, and ſhall ſpeak a few things from it unto you, and ſo come unto a cloſe for this time.

Firſt then, we conceive there are theſe ſeven advantages which attend thoſe who live within the continual ſight of this truth, that they muſt die.

I. Firſt, The Faith of approaching death will make a ſoul exceeding diligent in duty: this was our bleſſed Lords divinity, *Joh.* 9. 4. *I muſt work the work of him that ſent me, while it is day: The night cometh, when no man can work*; That is, death is approaching, therefore I muſt work. It is clear alſo, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. compared with verſ. 14. In the 12. verſ. *Peter* is exceeding diligent in his duty, and the ground of his diligence is in the 14. verſ. *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my tabernacle, &c.* Yea, it is even the Epicures argument, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die*; and ſhould

not

not the Christian much more cry out, Let mee watch and pray, for to morrow I may die? I say, if the Epicures did make use of this notion, to make them vigorous in the pursuit of their pleasures: O how much more should a Christian improve it, for making him vigorous in the pursuit of his duty? Therefore I say unto you all, O bee diligent, for your night is drawing near. O Christians, and expectants of heaven, are ye not afraid lest yee be nighted before ye have walked the half of your journey? For if yee bee nighted on your journey to heaven, before ye come to the end of your race, there is no retiring place whereunto yee may turn aside to lodge: therefore, *O work, work, work, while it is day*; for behold death is approaching, and then shall we all bee called to an account.

II. The Faith of approaching death, will make a Christian exceeding active in duty: hee will not only bee diligent, but also exceeding serious and zealous in the exercise of his duty: This is clear from that notable exhortation, *Eccles.* 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: and* the reason is, *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whether thou goest.* Wherefore O bee active while yee are alive, for ye shall never work any more after ye are dead; and if ye leave but one work undone, there is no doing of it after death. There is no work (saith Solomon

Solomon) in the grave; therefore, O be active.

III. The faith of this Truth, that we must all die, will help a Christian to be exceeding mortified to the things of a present world. Oh, covetous men and women, would ye shake hands with cold death but once every morning, I should defy you to pursue the world so much as ye do. *Paul* was much in the meditation of his change, which made him, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. to overlook these things that are temporary, *while we look not* (saith he) *to the things that are seen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are eternal*, therefore, chap. 5. 1. *Knowing that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, Therefore in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from heaven.* What aileth you *Paul* (might one have said) may ye not take a look of the world (no saith he) *For I know that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a house with God, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens:* That is, I know that ere long, the pins of my tabernacle will be loosed, and it will fall down about my ears, therefore I must look for another dwelling house: And, 1 *Cor.* 7. 24. *The fashions of this world passe away*, Therefore, saith he, vers. 32. I *would have you without carefulnesse, caring how to please the Lord.* And

Phil.

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Phil.

Phil. 4. 5. *Let your moderation be known to all men, The Lord is at hand.* As if he had said, Death is approaching and at hand, therefore I intreat you be sober: But I think many of us will be found like *Saul* hid among the stuffe, that is, we will be lying amongst the middest of the pleasures of this passing world: But I say unto thee who are such an one, that death will break the strings of thy harp, and thy musick will quickly cease. O but death will make thee have a low esteem of the world. O blessed is the person who hath these thoughts of the world all along his way, which he shall have of it at death? Have not the most cursed wretches been forced to cry forth, *Oh, I would give ten thousand worlds for Christ?* Have not some persons (who have had the Moon upon their head, and that have made their belly their god) being forced to cry forth at death; *O cursed person that I am that ever made the world my god?* Alas that I contented my self with the world. Therefore I say unto thee who art such an one, O stay thy pursuit after the world, for death is approaching that will cause all thy worldly comforts evanish.

IV. When a Christian believeth this Truth, that he must die, it will be an exceeding great restraint to keep him from sinning, as is clear, *Job* 31. 13. compared with vers. 14. where *Job* reckoning over many good deeds done by himself, saith, *What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when*

when he viſiteth, what ſhall I anſwer him? As if he had ſaid, Sirs miſtake me not, I am not boaſting much of my ſelf, for I could not have done otherwiſe, elſe what ſhould I do when God riſeth up? How could I anſwer to God if I had done otherwiſe? I think it were a notable practice for each of you, when temptations begin to aſſault you, to ſay, *O temptation, what will I anſwer to God, when he riſeth up to reprove me, if I ſhould yeeld unto thee?* Likewiſe, *Eccleſ* 11. 9. Where *Solomon*, diſſwading young men to purſue after vanity, bringeth this as a reaſon. *Know thou, that for all theſe things, God will bring thee to judgement*; Therefore I ſay unto thee, who art often tempted to ſin. ler death and reckoning with God be ſtill in thy ſight, and I defy thee then to imbrace half ſo many temptations as now thou doſt. I intreat you to anſwer all your temptations with that word, *What ſhall I do when he riſeth up? And what ſhall I anſwer when he viſiteth me?*

V. When a Chriſtian liveth within the ſight of this Truth, that he ſhall once ſee death, it ſhall make him exceeding patient under every croſſe wherewith he meeteth; Such a Chriſtian will hardly meet with a croſſe, but he will quiet himſelf with this, Death will put me beyond this croſſe: this is but a cloud that will quickly paſſe away. And for this cauſe did *David* ſo compoſedly put up that deſire, *Pſal.* 39 4. *Lord make me to know my end, and the meaſure of my dayes*

dayes: He was sure that the knowledge of his end would put him in a sober and patient frame.

VI. The sixth advantage is this, The faith of approaching death, will teach the the person that hath it, to study saving wisedome, This is clear, *Psal.* 90. 12. Where *David* putteth up this request, *So teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdome.* As if he had said, I will never think my self wise, till I know that blessed peece of Arithmetick, *How to number my dayes.* I would desire every one of you all to think with your self every morning when ye arise, now I am a day nearer unto eternity then I was before: and at the end of every hour, now I am an hour nearer unto eternity then I was before. I say, think often, yea alwayes thus, I was never so near my death as I am now; For, oh! are we not all nearer to eternity to day, then we were yesterday?

VII. The seventh advantage, attending the faith of approaching Death, is this, That it will make a Christian very carefull in preparing for Death. It is impossible for one to believe really that Death is approaching, and not to prepare for it. Say what ye will, if ye be not carefull in preparing for death, ye have not the solide faith of this truth, that ye shall die. Believe me, it is not every one that thinketh he believeth this truth, that believeth it indeed. And O how dreadfull is it for an unprepared man

man to meet with death? He desireth not to die, yea he would give a world for his life. but die must he whether he will or not: for death will not be requested to spare a little when he cometh; And therefore I say unto you all, *Set your house in order, for ye shall surely die*; Old men and women, *set your house in order, for surely ye must die*; Young men and women, *set your house in order, for to morrow ye may die, and be cut off in the flower of your age*, Think not that there are any who can sell time: for I say, ye shall never get time sold unto you. Alas, I fear the most part of persons that dieth now, death findeth them at unawars; for indeed the persons that die among us, when we come to visit them, we may give you a sad account of them, for we think they are comprehended under these four sorts.

1. First, When we go to visit some persons on their death bed, they are like unto *Nabal, their heart is dying and sinking (like unto a stone) within them*; they are no more affected with death, then if it were a fancy; (alas for the great stupidity that hath overtaken many) therefore I intreat you delay not your repentance till death, lest the Lord take away your wit, so that ye cannot then repent for your senslesnesse and stupid frame of spirit.

2. A second sort we find in a presumptuous frame, saying they have had a good hope all their dayes, and they will not quite it now; they will go down to the grave with

their hope in their right hand: or rather they will go down to the grave *with a lie in their right hand*; they live in a presumptuous frame, and they die in the same delusion. For when we tell them that by all probability they are going down to hell, they answer, God forbid, I was all my time a very honest man, or woman. But I love not that confession, for there are many such honest men and women in hell this day.

3. The third sort we find, having some convictions that they have been playing the fool all their dayes; but we can get them nō further: I shall only say to such, to go down to the grave with convictions in their breast, not making use of Christ, is to go down to hell with a candle in their hand to let them see the way: and truly the greater part that die, die in this manner.

4. Fourthly, There are some whom we find in a selfrighteous frame, trusting upon the Covenant of Works, and their own merits, and trusting by these to go to heaven: yet neglecting the offer of Christs righteousnesse. But, alas, we find not one of a thousand in this frame, *I desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ, that's best of all*: And scarce do we find any in such a frame, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Therefore I say unto you all who are here, O will ye mind death before it take hold on you. Oh mind your work now; for ye will find that death

shall

ſhall be work enough for it ſelf, though ye leave no work till then.

VIII. The eight advantage that attendeth the Chriſtian believing this truth, that once he muſt die, is this, death will not be ſo terrible to him as it is unto many when it cometh. What (think ye) maketh death *a king of terrours?* What maketh many to ſhake like the leaf of a tree, when they are ſummoned to appear before Gods Tribunal? It is even becauſe of this, they have not been thinking on death before it came, ſo as to prepare for it, and I fear many in this place may be feared for death, and that when it cometh to them; they will ſay unto death, at *Ahab* ſaid to *Elijah Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy?* Surely, death will take you and bring you to the judgement ſeat of Chriſt; Therefore ſtudy by all means to think often upon it; and make ready for it: For (believe me) death is a very big word, for it will once make you ſtand with horrour in your ſouls, if your peace be not made up with God: I know not a more dreadfull diſpenſation then death and a guilty conſcience meeting together.

The ſecond thing that I ſhall ſpeak unto from this firſt obſervation (viz. *That it is a moſt certain and infallible truth, and all perſons ſhall once ſee death*) ſhall be to give you ſome conſiderations for preſſing you to prepare for death.

I. The

I. The first consideration is this, *That to die well, and in the Lord*, is a most difficult work; therefore I intreat you prepare for death. It is a difficult work to communicate aright, it is a difficult work to pray aright, and it is a difficult work to confer aright: But I must tell you, it is a more difficult work to die aright, then any of these. It is true, it is more difficult to communicate aright, then to pray aright, yet it is much more difficult to die aright, then to communicate aright: For it is a most difficult work to die in the Lord. Death will put the most accurate Christian that is here, to a wonderfull search: and therefore I will tell you nine things that death will try in thee. 1. Death will try both the reality and strength of thy Faith. It may be easie for thee to keep up Faith under many difficulties, but death shall put thy Faith to the greatest stresse that ever it did meet with. Yea, know this that the Faith of the strongest Believer may get (and ordinarily doth get) a set at death, the like whereof it never got before: therefore prepare for death. 2. Death will try thy love to God, some persons pretend much love to him: but death will propose this question to such a person, *Lovest thou him more then these? Lovest thou him more then thy wife? More then thy house? More then thy friends?* But your unwillingnesse to die, giveth us much ground to fear that many have little love to Christ, but much to the world, and

and ſo dare not anſwer the queſtion, *Lord thou knoweſt I love thee.* 3. Death will try thine enjoyments, ſome of you may be ready to think that ye met with many enjoyments, ſo that ye might reckon (as you think) to fourty enjoyments and ſweet out lettings: but beware that death bring them not down to twenty. I have known ſome, who thought they had met fourty times with God; but when death came, it made them take down the count to the half, therefore ſeeing death will try the reality of thoſe enjoyments, O prepare for it. 4. Death will try thy patience. Thou may ſeem to have much patience now, but when death cometh (and thou art put to die) it will put thy patience to a great tryall, therefore prepare fore it. 5. Death will try the reality of thy duties, yea even theſe duties wherein thou had moſt ſatisfaction, as thy communicating aright in ſuch a place, thou hopeſt that is ſure: thy reading the Scripture at ſuch a time aright, thou hopeſt that is ſure: thou prayed at ſuch a time aright, and hopeſt that is ſure: thou meditated in ſuch a place aright, and hopeſt that is ſure. But (believe me) death may make thee change thy thoughts: for there are ſome perſons who have communicated and prayed, &c. as right as any in this generation, who (for all that) will not find ſix duties wherein they can find ſatisfaction at death: Therefore our need is great to prepare for it. 6. Death will exceedingly try thy

thy sincerity when it cometh: An hypocrite may go all alongs his whole way undiscovered, yet death may bring him to light, and make it appear what man he is. 7. Death will discover unto thee many hid and secret sins, of which thou never had a thought before, yea, albeit thou thought these had been forgotten, death will let thee see them standing between thee and the light of his countenance. 8. Death will accurately try thy Mortification: Some think they have come a great length in Mortification; but (believe me) death will try it and put it to the touch-stone. 9. Death will try thy hope, whether it bee real or not. I shall onely say this, that all the other graces must low their sails to Faith, and so it is Faith must carry us thorow, being that last triumphing grace; which must fit the field for us, when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is Faith that must enter us fairly within the borders of eternity, It is Faith must gainstand all the temptations of death, yea, all the other graces must (as it were) stand by, and see Faith strike the last stroak in this war.

II. The second consideration to presse you to mind death, is this, that yee are to die but once. O labour to do that well, which yee are to do but once, and the wrong doing of which can never bee helped. If yee pray not aright, ye may get that mended: if yee meditate not aright, yee may get that mended: and if ye communicate not aright,

ye

ye may get that also mended: but alas, if ye die not aright, there is no mending of that: Therefore, O prepare for death, that ye may die well, seeing ye are to die but once.

III. The third consideration to presse you to mind death, is this, That they are pronounced blessed who die in the Lord, Rev. 14. 13. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*, O let that provoke you to prepare for death, that so you may die in the Lord, that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confesse it is a question difficult to determine whether it be more difficult to die well, or to live well; I shall not answer it, but rather desire you to study both.

IV. The fourth consideration to presse you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That though thou put all thy work by thy hand before death, yet shalt thou finde that death shall have work enough for it self, yea, as much as thou shalt get done. It will then be much for thee to win to patience, it will be much for thee to win to the light of thy Justification: and it will then be much for thee to win to assurance: O then is it not needfull for thee, to put all thy work by thy hand before thy latter end come? Wherefore I may say to you as *Moses* said in his Song, Deut. 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.* O that ye had this piece of divine wisdome. I pray you consider that sad

word

word, *Lament.* 1. 9. *She remembereth not her last end*, And what of it? *Therefore she came down wonderfully*: So will the down coming of many in this generation be wonderfull, who consider not their last end.

V. The fifth Consideration, for pressing you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That their labour shall end, but their works shall not be forgotten, as is clear from that forecited place, *Revel.* 14. 13. *They rest from their labours, and their works follow them*: and is not that a glorious advantage?

VI. The sixth consideration to presse you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That death may come upon you ere ye be awar: ye know not but death may surprise you this night, before you go home to your houses: and therefore let that presse you to study a constant preparation for death.

VII. The seventh Consideration to presse you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That as death leaveth you, so will judgement find you, If death shall leave you strangers to Christ, ye shall appear before his judgement seat strangers unto him: Therefore I intreat you all to prepare for it. I think that noble practice of *Paul* exceeding worthy of imitation, 1 *Cor.* 15. 13. *I die dayly*, which (I think) doth comprehend these three things. 1. That *Paul* had death alwayes in his sight. 2. It comprehendeth this, that he endeavoured to keep such a frame, as that every moment he should be ready to die, so that whensoever death should

should put the summonds in his hand, he should be content to answer. 3. It comprehendeth this, that he laboured to lay aside and remove all things out of the way, that might detain him from laying down his tabernacle. O saith *Paul*, I labour so to clear my self of all hinderances, as that when ever I shall be summoned to remove out of time, I may willingly lay down my life. Thus *Paul* desired alwayes to have his Latter Will clear; Therefore I would ask you this question, *viz.* when did you make your last testament? I think it were suitable for us to be renewing our latter will every day; for in so doing, *Paul* made an excellent testament, the better of which, none that died since have made, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have keeped the faith*; These are very sweet articles, and then he addeth, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousnesse, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day*: And think ye not that very sweet? And he would leave some thing unto you in Christs Name, *viz.* *And not for me only, but for all them that wait for his appearance.* Now I come to the third thing proposed, *viz.* To give you some directions for helping you to prepare for death.

Direct. 1. I intreat you, be much in preparation for death every day, for it is even a preparation for heaven, to be taking a sight of your grave and latter end every day.

Direct. 2. I intreat you, be much in these

duties. First, In Self examination, that your compts may be clear with God: for many a ragged compt will we have, when death and we shall meet. Secondly, Be much in the exercise of Repentance, that so ye may have every fault of corruption in you mourned for, before death and you meet. Thirdly, Be much in the exercise of Faith, *making your calling and election sure?* Fourthly, Be much in the exercise of Mortification, and that will help you to keep a loose grip, not only of the world, but also of your other idols; And if ye be much in these, ye shall undoubtedly be prepared for death.

Direct. 3. Be much in minding the excellent things of heaven. A Christian that would be prepared for death, would have all his thoughts and conversation there. I think, it would be an excellent help (in preparation for death) to take a sight of the Crown every day.

Direct. 4. *Labour always to keep a good conscience void of offence towards God and men:* I say, labour to keep thy conscience clear, and that shall be a continual feast unto thee.

Direct. 5. Slight not thy known duty, do not crucify any conviction, neither break any resolution: put these three together, and that will exceedingly help you to prepare for death: I say, see that ye adventure not to slight any known duty, see that ye adventure not to crucifie any conviction, and see that ye adventure not to break your resolutions.

Now

Now we come to the second thing which we observed from the words, *viz.* That this truth, that we shall once see death, is not much believed by many of us. And to make this appear, we shall only give some Evidences unto you, to prove that we are not as yet prepared for death.

I. *Evidence*, Doth not the unspeakable stupidity that have overtaken many, say, that we are not a people prepared for death? Alas, many of us would find our selves in a most stupid temper if we were presently to die; for many of us are no more moved with the threatnings and terrours of God, then if they did not belong unto us; and this saith we are not as yet prepared for death.

II. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared for death, is our pursuing so much after the vain and passing delights of a present world. Many of us, *Rise up early, and go late to bed at night, and eateth the bread of sorrow all the day, and loading themselves with thick clay*; And I am sure, that such a person, (being night and day taken up with the world) is not prepared for death. I remember a word recorded of such a wretched one, who was exceedingly rich; said he, I would give so many thousands of money, if death would give me but one day: yet he got it not. And O how suddenly will death surprise many of you as it did him?

III. *Evidence*, which speaketh forth our unpreparedness for death, is our impatience

under every petty crosse that we meet with; for the prepared Christian will be patient under very sharp crosses.

IV. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared, is our not endeavouring to live within sight of our interest in God. Oh if wee were prepared for death, durst we live in so much uncertainty of our interest in God, and of our assurance of heaven?

V. *Evidence*. Some of us can let our Idols ly in our brest six years without repentance, and will never study to mortifie them, nor to repent for them; and surely such are not prepared for death.

Now I intreat you seriously to minde what hath been said. And that yee may the more seriously think upon it, I will tell you some materiall challenges that your consciences at death will present unto you, therefore take heed, that yee may know how yee will answer.

I. *Challenge*. Is the slighting of much precious Time, and sinning away the precious offers of Grace. O what will yee answer to that Challenge, when Death shall present it to you? Death will say (or rather thine own Conscience at Death) what ailed thee to sin away so many hours, without either Praying, Reading, or Meditating? Now have yee any thing to answer when Death shall present this Challenge to you? I intreat you premeditate what ye will say: I intreat you prevent death by presenting it first seriously to your selves.

II.

II. *Challenge*, That Death will present unto you, will be, for the killing of many precious Convictions which we have had. What will each of you answer at death, when your conscience proposeth this challenge to you? thou met with such a challenge at such a time, and went home and crucified it, when at another time thou met with another challenge, and went home and crucified it: These challenges will be laid home to thy door, therefore think on them.

III. *Challenge*, Death will charge you for a formal hypocriticall way of going about duties: I say your Conscience will then tell you, that ye went to such a Communion with a selfish end: and at another time ye prayed hypocritically and formally: and what will ye have to answer when ye meet with these challenges? I confesse I know not what ye can answer to these; but I charge you, be thinking what ye will answer, for it may be that these convictions shall ly on your consciences, that even this day ye have heard two searching Sermons, and did meet with some convictions; but made no good use of them; yea, and it may be ye did sleep all the time. O what will ye answer, when it will be said to you, ye went to such a Sermon and sleeped all the time: and ye went to such a Communion, but had no other end before your eyes but to be seen of men? I intreat you consider presently what ye will answer to these.

IV. *Challenge*, Will be for your breaking

of many precious resolutions. It will be said to some of you, that at the Communion in this place, ye took on vowes, and did break them: I am sure ye cannot question the justice of this challenge: therefore see what ye will answer?

V. *Challenge*, Ye slighted many precious offers of the Gospel; O men and women in this city, what will ye answer to this? I was often exhorted to take Christ, and yet would never take him; What will Conscience say to that, when death shall table it before you? I tell you what ye must then answer, O cursed I, that ever refused Christ in the Gospel, and ye shall then be confounded because this is your sin. (Believe me) there was never an offer of this everlasting Gospel, and of Christ in it made unto you, that shall not at death (before or after) be brought to your remembrance; and O how sad and doleful will it be to you, when Christ shall open the book where your sins are written, and begin with the sin of slighting the Great Salvation? thus I invited you when you were twelve years old, and ye would not come, I invited you when ye were thirty years old, and ye would not come, I invited you when sixty years old, and ye would not come: What will ye answer to this? Have ye any thing to say? Or must ye not stand speechlesse before your Judge, when he shall put home this challenge unto you, therefore think seriously upon it, how ye will answer to it.

VI. *Challenge*

VI. *Challenge*, will be for your ſinning oftentimes againſt Light, and O how ſad and painfull a challenge will that be at the day of Death! when it will be ſaid, thou ſinned with a witneſſe in thy boſome that thou waſt doing wrong: thy Conſcience will ſay, oftentimes did I tell thee this is ſinfull, yet wouldeſt thou not abſtain from it: And what will ye anſwer from this?

VII. *Challenge*, Oftentimes ye ſinned upon every ſmall temptations, and what will ye anſwer to that? Muſt ye not then confeſſe it, and ſay, O how often have I deſerted Chriſt and imbraced my idols upon a ſmall temdtation? Now I intreat you be thinking what ye will anſwer to theſe ſeven moſt material Challenges which certainly ſhall be preſented to you at death. I aſſure you, ye muſt either anſwer all your challenges in Chriſt, elſe ye will not get them well anſwered. Therefore I would exhort you to imbrace the Goſpel and Chriſt in it: that ſo let death propoſe never ſo many challenges unto you, ye may anſwer them all as *David* did, *viz. God hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant*, (and that will anſwer all your challenges) *though my houſe be not ſo with God, yet I have the everlaſting Covenant to build my ſalvation upon.*

Now to preſſe you to make uſe of Chriſt, I ſhall give you theſe four Conſiderations.

Conſideration 1. If ye imbrace not Chriſt now, Death will be very unpleaſant to you

you. O what elſe can comfort thee, when going through the region of the ſhadow of Death, but this, I am Chriſts, I am Chriſts? is there any other thing can comfort thee in that day, but only this, *I am Chriſts, and He is mine?*

Conſideration 2. If ye imbrace not Chriſt and the Great Salvation now, It will be an hundred to one, if ever ye get time or libertie to do it, when ye are going to die. For although many delay their cloſing with Chriſt till death, yet ſcarcely one of a hundred getteth favour to grip Chriſt at death: therefore think on it, for ye will not get your mind ſo compoſed at death as ye imagine, nor all things done as ye ſuppoſe: therefore now imbrace the Great Salvation.

Conſideration 3. If ye delay your cloſing with Chriſt, till death ſeiſe upon you, ye ſhall never be able to make up that loſſe, *For will the dead riſe and praiſe God? Or ſhall any come from the land of forgetfulneſſe, to take hold upon a crucified Saviour?* Therefor, O will ye take him for your Salvation.

Conſideration 4. If ye will take Chriſt now, he ſhall be your guide, *When ye are going through the valley and ſhadow of death.* And O how bleſſed is the perſon that can ſing that word, *Pſal.* 48. 14. *This is my God, he will be my guide even unto death.* If ye can ſing that pleaſant ſong, O how may ye be comforted, when your eye ſtrings

ſhall

ſhall begin to break? O how happy is hee who can ſay, *Though I walk through the ſhadow of death, yet will I fear no ill; for I know that the Lord is with mee.* Now this is the acceptable day, and the year of ſalvation, therefore do not delay, but imbrace Chriſt, leſt death ſurpriſe you ere yee be aware, and ſo the acceptable day be loſt. But unto theſe who think they may delay till death, I ſay, ſurely there are many damned atheiſts in hell that (ſometime) did think as yee think: *I will make all wrongs right when death and I ſhall meet*: I hope that three dayes repentance will ſatisfie for all my wrongs: for I am ſure there are many in hell, who did never get three dayes to think upon their former wayes; Therefore, *O come, come*, and imbrace Chriſt preſently: Now are yee all perſwaded of this truth, that yee ſhall once ſee death? Then ſtudy a tender walking; for (believe me) there are many of us who ſhall go thorow death with many bruiſed bones, becauſe of untender walking before God. We know it is not the multitude of words can perſwade you to imbrace Chriſt, for many of you never minded the thing: but (believe mee) death will preach theſe things to you in a more terrible manner then wee can do at this time. Therefore I ſay to each of you, O prepare to meet thy God; for, if death finde you in an eſtranged eſtate from God, I defy the Angels in Heaven to free you out of that eſtate. And the day is coming wherein thou ſhalt cry out, *O ſlighter of the*

the Great Salvation that I am, I would give ten thousand worlds for one Sermon again that I once heard, wherein Christ was freely offered to me, when thou shalt bee tormented without hope of remedy; Therefore, *While it is to day, harden not your hearts*, for your late wishes shall not bee granted (when yee are gone) if yee make not haste. O therefore *Haste, haste in time, and come out from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage*, and take Christ for your Redeemer, the guide of your youth and old age. Now unto him, who can lead you thorow all these steps betwixt you and heaven, be eternal praise. *Amen.*

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